

Divine guidance, through the letters, to the sincere aspirants on the path of devotion by a Messenger of Lord Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Goswāmī Mahārāj

ALL GLORIES TO ŚRĪ ŚRĪ GURU AND GAURĀṄGA!

# Affectionately Yours

*Divine letters collections (1981 - 2012)*

**His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Goswāmī Mahārāj**

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Śrī Chaitanya: His Life & Associates

A Taste of Transcendence

Sages of Ancient India

Śuddha Bhakti: The Path of Pure Devotion

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Ballabh Tirtha Goswāmī Mahārāj

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## **Preface**

A primary feature of the modern world is the great extent and rapid

speed of communication. It is the nature of living beings to share their experiences and knowledge with others—communication is the very essence of relationships. However, the plight of the jīvātmā (individual spirit soul) immersed in the material world is such that most communication is focused on mundane temporary relationships and temporary sense objects, and therefore contributes to an overall sense of impermanence, not just of the world but also of the self. As the actual nature of the jīvātmā is that of an eternally existing entity, he or she can never find happiness in this paradoxical situation. However, the ancient Indian scriptures and the guardians of those sacred literatures in the form of authentic sampradāyas (lineages of spiritual preceptors) communicate to us a more positive and complete view of Reality— an environment where the focus is on the eternal relationships between the Supreme Transcendental Divine Couple, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Krishna, and Their devotees, in a variety of mellows of divine love. We are also informed that access to this divine realm is by the sincere cultivation of a relationship with a representative and intimate associate of these Transcendental Personalities— a śuddha-bhakta, a guru established in pure eternal transcendental devotion and knowledge. By hearing from such a person, by exchanging thoughts and loving sentiments with such a person, the heart becomes saturated with divine love, and realisation of one's actual nature as the eternal servant of God is revealed.

The present book, consisting of the letters, transcendental communications, between His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Goswāmī Mahārāj and his dear disciples and followers, is an example of the importance of association with a self-realised person for those with the desire to understand Ultimate Truth and their actual self. Not only that, it is an example of the most affectionate and compassionate nature of the bona-fide spiritual guru for his disciples and, likewise, the affection of the sincere disciples for their guru. Without a doubt, one of Śrīla Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Goswāmī Mahārāj's foremost qualities is his affectionate nature and humble attitude. He is a most munificent and self-realised soul, and the exchanges over the years via mail collated in this book demonstrate this clearly. In fact it can be said that his signing of “Affectionately yours” at the end of his letters reveals everything about his endearing personality and demeanor.

We thank the devotees who contributed their letters to this presentation. Respecting the confidentiality we tried to carefully eliminate the personal information, if any, and also limited the devotees' elaborate letters to His Divine Grace to few words or sentences, just to retain the questions. We humbly request forgiveness for any errors or omissions we may have made in this endeavour to present the timeless message of His Divine Grace to the contemporary reader.

The present book, being a more extensive collection of letters sent till date, retains the same title as it was published few years ago in the form of a magazine. Some of these letters were personally written by His Divine Grace, some sent via email with the help of His personal assistants while some were drafted by them under His guidance.

We extend our heart-felt thanks to all those who have contributed to this project through their valuable suggestions, time and effort.

It is our hope that all spiritual practitioners, whether aspiring, novice or advanced will relish the contents of this book. We pray to His Divine Grace for his mercy and blessings upon all sincere sādhakas pursuing the path of devotion. May Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛishna be pleased with this attempt to serve the lotus feet of Their pure devotee.

With humility, The Publishers

## **PART 1 Fundamentals of Devotion**

If there is a mistake in determining the self, there will also be a mistake in the determination of the actual necessity of the self. If necessity (goal of life) is wrongly determined, the means to achieve it will also be wrong. So, all efforts will be futile. It is very essential to have clear and correct knowledge of self.

### **Root cause of sufferings**

Dear Śrī ,

Fundamentals of Devotion

All glory to Śrī Guru & Gaurāṅga

Received your letter dated sent by e-mail and noted the contents. May All Merciful Śrī Guru, Gaurāṅga Rādhā Krishna bless you.

The very fact that we are in bondage and are suffering threefold afflictions proves that we are averse to God (Śrī Krishna). The root cause of our affliction is forgetfulness of our eternal relationship with Śrī Krishna. Those jīvas, who have done eternal good deeds, who are fortunate, come in contact with real sādhus (śuddha bhaktas) and come to know about their real self; that they are eternal servants of Śrī Krishna and as they have forgotten their eternal relationship with Śrī Krishna, they are entangled in the snare of Māya. Now if they take absolute shelter at the Lotus Feet of Śrī Krishna, they will be rescued. Jīvas are atomic spiritual sparks - they have the qualities of thinking, feeling and willing. Misuse of their relative independence (volition) is the cause of their averseness to Śrī

Krishna.

Śrī Krishna does not want to destroy the relative independence of jīvas, because by that, the very purpose and existence of jīvas will be destroyed. So Śrī Krishna and His devotees always try to advise jīvas and make them understand so that they will submit to Him willingly.

We do not know when we have become averse to God - to our Supreme Master, Śrī Krishna. We do not find any date here. We have forgotten our relationship with Śrī Krishna from time immemorial. When we became averse to Śrī Krishna by misuse of our relative independence, the illusory energy (external material energy) of Śrī Krishna enveloped us and since then we have been passing through innumerable cycles of births and deaths.

We reap the fruits of our own good and bad deeds. We should not blame others for the afflictions we get due to our own karma. Others may be instrumental, but not the cause. The result of karma (prārabdha karma) which has started should be suffered or enjoyed — whether he is an ascetic or a householder.

Only śuddha-bhakti or śuddha nām can destroy the fruits of even prārabdha-karma. My love to you all.

Affectionately yours, Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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**Accept the path willingly**

The Supreme Lord never interferes with the relative independence of the conditioned souls. If their relative independence is stopped forcibly, the individual soul which is *aṇu- sacchidānanda* will be destroyed. If consciousness is destroyed, both the Supreme Lord, Who is All-existence, All-knowledge and All-bliss, as well as the *jīva*, a minute particle of consciousness originating from the marginal potency, will not be benefited. Hence the Supreme Lord does not interfere in the relative independence of conditioned souls, but as the indwelling monitor, existing within their hearts, He bestows upon them the discriminating power of understanding what is good and bad, eternal and non-eternal. Sometimes He Himself appears to help the *jīvas* to make good use of their relative independence and take absolute shelter of Him, and He also inspires the conditioned souls through His personal associates. The individual soul should submit to God willingly. If the Supreme Lord does not want to do anything forcibly to change the minds of the conditioned souls, how can conditioned souls, like us, use force to change individual minds? *Sādhus* (pure devotees) always help all conditioned souls to accept the right path willingly, by dint of their ideal lives and affectionate behaviour.

Enslaved *jīvas*, who are averse to Śrī Krishna and want to enjoy the material world, are enveloped by the material energy consisting of three primal qualities - *sattva*, *rajaḥ* and *tamaḥ* - which are designated as *Mahamāya*. The non-eternal bodies of living beings are created by *rajo guṇa*, they are sustained for some time by *sattva guṇa* and they are destroyed by *tamo guṇa*. To fulfill the desires of the unfortunate *jīvas*, the Supreme Lord has created 84 lacs (8,400,000) of species. The Lord is satisfied by creating the human species because they are capable of accepting the Eternal Truth and giving up non- eternal things, i.e. they are capable of worshipping God. The human birth is not meant for eating, sleeping, defending, and mating like beasts and birds. It is only meant for worship of the Supreme Lord.

*sṛṣṭvā purāṇi vividhāny ajayātma-śaktyā vṛkṣān sarīṣṛpa-paśūn khagada-  
dandaśūkān tais tair atuṣṭa-hṛdayaḥ puruṣaṁ vidhāya brahmāvaloka-dhiṣaṇaṁ  
mudam āpa devaḥ*

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 11.9.28)

'The Supreme Lord did not get contentment after creating the variety of living beings — trees, reptiles, beasts, birds and ferocious animals etc.— by His own Māya śakti. So lastly, He created the human species and was satisfied, because human beings have the proper eligibility to worship Krishna.'

So, God's desire is that human beings should worship Him. Consider the following example: One person had enough money, was a well-to-do person and had all comforts, but he had difficulties with his wife. His wife was disobedient and obstinate. There always was disturbance and want of peace in the family. He had one friend who was very expert in mesmerism. He expressed his heart to him and prayed to him whether he could make his wife obedient to him. That mesmerizer gave him one magic stick. By that stick he could regulate his wife. Whatever he would order her to do, she would be forced to do. He was very happy on hearing this. He came back to the house with that stick and ordered his wife, 'sit down', 'stand up', 'come here'. In this way whatever he was ordering his wife, she was doing. But after doing this for some time he lost interest in it, because it became like a puppet show of dolls, without life. He wanted his wife to obey him willingly and by her own independence. If necessary she could object, and could say anything against him also. If she moved like a lifeless doll, the husband would not get any satisfaction. Similarly, if the Lord forcibly makes sentient beings do something, their consciousness will be destroyed, it will become matter. The Supreme Lord is not a fool, He is Omniscient. He cannot do such nonsense which is not beneficial to the sentient beings. The wife, retaining her relative independence, should willingly perform action for the satisfaction of the husband. As it is stated before, by making her a lifeless doll the husband will not be benefited.

My love to you all. May the All-Merciful Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga and Śrī Krishna bless you.

Affectionately yours, Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha



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**Question to Śrīla Gurudev** - *Are karma and free choice incompatible? Do we really have free choice, as all that happens in samasāra is the cause and effect of karma? Or is it not?*

## **Power of discrimination**

God has bestowed conscience, discriminating power between good and bad, eternal and non-eternal, to human beings so they can accept that which is eternal and good and give up that which is non-eternal and bad. Human beings, because of their power of discrimination, are superior to all other species of living beings.

As human beings have this discriminating power between good and bad, right and wrong, if they do wrong and perform bad actions, they are liable to be punished, as stated in the Gītā—'karmaṇy evādhikāras te mā phaleṣu kadācana' 'We have got the right to do karma, actions, but the fruits of actions are controlled by Me (Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna).' Beasts, birds etc. have no such discriminating power and the understanding, they are not punished like human beings. They have their development gradually. There are exceptional cases in regard to this as stated in the scripture. 'A pigeon, being shot by a hunter with an arrow, fell down on the ground from a tree, circumambulated Viṣṇu's temple while fidgeting and died. The pigeon did not know that God is satisfied if any living being circumambulates His temple and that such a being will get the approved fruit. But due to this eternal good deed, the pigeon took his next birth in a human body, in a brāhmin family. By crossing over numerous, intermediate, other births, he got the association of a bona fide devotee and attained the Lotus Feet of the Supreme Lord.

## Holy names

As stated above, although human beings are liable to be punished, they can be released from the sins of millions of births just by nāmābhās— glow of the Holy Name of Śrī Hari. Even they can get emancipation. An example is Ajāmila, as narrated in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, 6th Canto. It is stated in the Padma Purāṇa that while doing Harinām, the votary should be careful not to commit offence to Viṣṇu and vaiṣṇavas. Offence to vaiṣṇavas is more serious than offence committed to Viṣṇu. Ajāmila did not speak ill of God or devotees, but had the aptitude for sense enjoyment. His youngest son's name was Nārāyaṇ. He had great affection for the son and was fully engrossed in thinking about his son. All of a sudden, three messengers of the God of death appeared. By seeing these horrifying figures, out of fear, he loudly called out for his son 'Nārāyaṇ!' From the little son, it ultimately targeted Viṣṇu -- Nārāyaṇ, so it is called 'sāṅketya nāmābhās'. By this he was rescued from all sins committed in his millions of births and he even got emancipation, mukti.

Uttering of the Holy Name is more powerful than performing silently on the beads. If the Holy Name is uttered loudly, beasts and birds will also be benefited by hearing.

It is stated above that offenders committing offence to vaiṣṇavas and guru are not rescued by uttering the Holy Name, but again in this very Kaliyuga, the Supreme Lord appeared as Gaura-Nityānanda. Even if the offenders, who committed offence to vaiṣṇavas and guru, utter the Holy Name Nitai-Gaurāṅga, with firm faith that Śrīman Nityananda Prabhu and Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu are Grace-incarnate Forms of the Supreme Lord, they will be rescued from the offences. Our Most Revered Gurudev used to warn that the votary should be simple hearted and sincere. It is not that out of deceitfulness they go on reproaching the sādhus and gurus thinking that they will utter Nitai-Gaurāṅga at the end of the day and they will be rescued. This is also a kind of offence, like one of the tenfold offences to Holy Name - 'nāma bale pāp budhi' - to commit sins thinking that chanting of the Holy Name will destroy all sins.

My love to you all. May All-Merciful Śrī Guru and Śrī Gaurāṅga bless you.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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## **Mundane vs eternal welfare**

It will not be wise to devote our valuable time and energy of this precious human birth for mundane affairs and mundane temporary benefits. This brahmāṇḍa is the prison house of the culprits who are averse to the service of the Supreme Eternal Master, Śrī Krishna. Culprits cannot expect to get peace in this prison house.

Blessed are those who have the association of a bona fide śuddha-bhakta and who remember Śrī Krishna always. Incessant remembrance of Śrī Krishna will eradicate all evils. If we want eternal benefit we should submit to Śrī Krishna unconditionally and serve Him. Śaraṇāgati is the best solution to all problems.

Mundane benefits are not actual benefits, as whatever we do in this world is impermanent. Relations in this world are most temporary. Efforts in this world will not produce lasting results. But what can we do, as we are entangled in these temporary mundane affairs? To make the best of a bad bargain, primary attention should be given for eternal benefit. Interests of the apparent selves should be subservient to the interest of the real self; otherwise, ultimately we may feel frustration.

There is no cause for rejoicing and moroseness in any happening of the temporary world. Everything is impermanent here. Our eternal place of stay is in the Transcendental Region - Goloka Vrindāvana. All our efforts to establish ourselves in this impermanent world will be finished, the moment this body perishes.

My love to you all. May the All-Merciful Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga and Śrī Krishna bless you.

Affectionately yours, Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

## **Only real thing**

Whatever you have written in your letter is applicable to all conditioned souls. We are the eternal servants of the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna, but when we forget Him, the illusory energy of Śrī Krishna envelops us and we are put into this miserable plight. We wrongly think we are physical bodies and physical relations are the real relations. All these mundane relations may vanish any moment. Remembrance of Śrī Krishna and service of Śrī Krishna is the only real thing and nothing is real in this world. Under all circumstances we should always worship Śrī Krishna.

There is no difficulty in the worship of Śrī Krishna, as He is the nearest and dearest.

He is residing within our hearts. He is seeing everything. If we sincerely desire to serve Him, He will surely help us. He does not see mundane merits. He sees the sincerity of our hearts whether we actually want Him or not. One who sincerely wants Him, will surely get Him. You submit all your prayers to Him sincerely. He will fulfil your desires.

My love to you all. May the All-Merciful Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga and Śrī Krishna bless you.

Affectionately yours, Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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**Question to Śrīla Gurudev** - *The basis of Vaishnavism is the conception about soul, body, material consciousness and false ego. To gain success in my spiritual life, I should completely reject all that I consider “me” and “myself” now. It*

*takes time and sincere practice to understand that I am not this body. But it is very difficult for me to accept that we should perform sādhana to finish our false self to get the real self, because I don't consider “myself” as something false. It is completely impossible to live in this world with this idea of “self-destruction”. Whom do you want to see in me? Which person should I become? You told me to perform bhajan. I do it - partially as a duty, partially as a habit. But without fundamental realisation and faith, I cannot do it sincerely.*

## **What is bhakti?**

Received your letter sent by e-mail and noted the contents.

At present I am somehow pulling on. Comparatively, I may say, I am a bit better. I am advised not to undertake any journey outside India this year, to speak less and to take complete rest. What is the use of going for preaching if I cannot serve the devotees there? The Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna willing, I have the desire to go to some place in Europe or Russia next year. My present health condition does not permit me to take the risk of an extensive tour programme. If there be any programme in Russia, I shall remain in one place and devotees are to come to that place to meet me. At the most I may go to Minsk (Belarus) from Moscow.

The Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna and His Absolute Counterpart, bona fide śuddha bhakta, are impartial to all. The Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna has emphatically said in the Gītā (6.40) - 'A sincere soul will never be deceived or distressed.'

Śrīla Rūpā Goswāmī in his writing, 'Śrī Bhakti-Rasāmṛta-Sindhu', has given the definition of 'bhakti'—

*sarvopādhi-vinirmuktaṁ tat-paratvena nirmalam hṛṣīkeṇa hṛṣīkeśa- sevanaṁ*

*bhaktir ucyate*

(Nārada-pañcharātra)

Our Most Revered Gurudev used to explain this Sanskrit verse elaborately. 'sarvopādhi-vinirmuktaṁ'— in this world we get numerous denominations according to our actions, viz., doctor, lawyer, businessman, engineer and so on and even egos of varṇāśrama - brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya and śūdra, four stages - brahmacharya, gṛhastha, vānaprastha and sannyās, and egos of belonging to any country, province, language, sect, political party, group. All these material egos of the world are to be effaced from the mind. This whole Brahmāṇḍa (consisting of 14 worlds) is considered unholy - 'avirinchat amaṅgalam'. Even if anybody thinks he belongs to this brahmāṇḍa, he becomes unholy, he cannot perform bhakti. Again, by simply giving up all unholy egos of this world we are not eligible to do bhakti. tat-paratvena nirmalam— we are not of this world, we are of the Supreme Lord, Who is All-Good and Transcendental. When we realise this, then we can become pure. According to the evidence of the Gītā, subtle and gross bodies are the outcome of the 'aparā potency' of the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna and ātmā (real self) is the outcome of the 'parā potency'. Potency should remain for the possessor of potency. Actually, the Supreme Lord is the owner of my real and apparent selves, gross and subtle. After giving up all false apparent egos and accepting the real ego that I am of Krishna, whatever I shall do by my sense organs, for the service of Transcendental Reality Śrī Krishna, is called 'bhakti'.

'Bhaktistu bhagvad bhakta saṅgena parijāyate' —Bṛhad Nāradiya Purāṇa. 'Bhakti can be manifested only by the association of pure devotees.' A pure devotee, śuddha bhakta, is identical with sādhu. Any person, who has accumulations of previous impressions of eternal good deeds, is eligible to get the association of bona fide sādhus. When one, knowingly or unknowingly, serves the Supreme Lord or His pure devotees, accumulation of such impressions of eternal good deeds has impact on the real self, which causes awakening of the real self for the search of Eternal Truth.

Prahlād Maharāj, in reply to the question of his father Hiranyaśipu, has clearly said that no conditioned soul of the world can have devotion to the Supreme Lord by his own capacity and by the united efforts of other conditioned souls, until he takes bath in the holy dust of the lotus feet of a śuddha bhakta, pure devotee, i.e., until he gets the grace of a pure devotee.

We should give more stress to positive devotional practice instead of negative practice. While in the process of trying to negate the material physical body and bodily relations, thoughts of the body and bodily relationships come to our mind. But in doing positive devotional practice, remembrance of our actual real self and actual eternal relationship with Śrī Krishna and His devotees, will enter into our mind and thinking of non-eternal things of this world will be automatically removed. If you can do this remembrance of Krishna and His devotees always, uninterruptedly, you will get deliverance from your entanglement with non-eternal relationships.

But at the present stage of enslaved condition, an enslaved jīva is incapable of withdrawing his mind from worldly non-eternal things. Hence, association of well- established realised souls - sādhus - is absolutely necessary. If you keep company with the persons of the world, who have the wrong conception of self and attraction for worldly things, it will be impossible for you to release yourself from the grip of false self and false non-eternal relationships.

## **Root cause of sin - kāma**

You can get a clear idea of it by carefully going through the writings of Śrīla Bhaktivinode Ṭhākura in his exposition of the three verses of the Gītā, 3rd chapter, verses 36, 37 and 39: “Arjuna asked, 'O! Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna, why is a jīva (conditioned soul) forced to commit sin even against his desire to do it? You have stated that a spirit soul is eternal and pure— completely separate from all material qualities and relations. As such a jīva cannot commit sin by

nature, but it is seen they are always committing sins. Therefore, clearly tell me who is engaging the jīva to commit sin.' Bhagavān said, 'O Arjuna! Passion originating from rajo-guṇa induces a person to commit sin. Kāma (passion) is desire for enjoyment. Passion is turned into anger by circumstance. Kāma is produced by rajo-guṇa and when there is obstruction in the fulfilment of the desire, by the influence of tamo-guṇa, it turns into anger.

'Kāma' is very violent and can devour everything. 'Kāma' is the principal enemy of the jīva. This passion causes nescience. Kāma certainly is the eternal foe of the jīva. This passion, like turbulent fire, envelops the jīva-soul. As I (Bhagavān) am Spiritual Substance, jīva is also spiritual entity. The difference is this, I am complete Spiritual Substance, possessing all opulences, and jīva is the minutest particle of spiritual energy and by My bestowed power, capable of doing action. As such, jīva's eternal nature is to serve Me. This is called 'prema' - Divine Love - or service of Krishna without gainful motive. Every conscious entity is naturally independent. Spirit soul is also independent (self-guided). Therefore, every spirit soul should willingly be My eternal servant. Passion or nescience is misuse of relative independence. Those jīvas, who by misuse of their relative independence, do not accept Me as their Eternal Master are degenerated. Kāma gradually envelops them and they are reduced to almost inert matter. This is called jīva's entanglement with the non-eternal relationships of the world and consequently subjection to worldly sufferings'.

## **Way to acquire divine knowledge**

As the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna is Transcendental, His instructions are also Transcendental. As such the purport of His sayings is only revealed to a completely surrendered soul. The significance of His pithy sayings - apophthegms - cannot be understood or realised correctly by human efforts through inductive process, i.e., by review or discussions. It is very clear in the aforesaid teachings of the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna, and explanation of those teachings by Śrīla Bhaktivinode Ṭhākura, that Śrī Krishna has emphatically said, He and His own persons, bona fide guru or śuddha bhakta, never interfere in the



relative independence of the conditioned souls. The Supreme Lord, by His personal appearance or by His representative's appearance as guru or sādhu, always tries to persuade the conditioned souls to accept His teachings willingly and submit to Him. How can sādhaka bhaktas (performers of sādhana bhakti) supersede the process of persuasion of the Supreme Lord and His personal associates and forcibly inculcate the teachings in conditioned souls for submission to the Supreme Lord? It is not good to elaborate the subject further.

My stay in Calcutta Maṭh may be prolonged for one and a half months including Janmāṣṭamī, Rādhāṣṭamī and other functions.

Hope this will find you all in good health and spirit. My love to you all. May the All- Merciful Supreme Lord, Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga and Rādhā-Krishna bless you.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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## **The soul, the material world, and the Supreme Lord**

**Question to Śrīla Gurudev** - *Can you explain how the soul, having a spiritual origin, comes in contact with the material energy?*

In quality, the soul is a conscious unit and has the propensity for thinking, feeling and willing. These are the qualities of consciousness. So God has given

this relative independence to every spirit soul. You can go either side. If he is forced to go one side, then he has become inert. He has got no value. God can do - can forcibly do - but then he will be reduced to inert. God will not get any benefit and that sensual being will not get any benefit. So He appears and tries to advise him to submit to Him by his own will, by doing good with his own will. He is not forcing. He himself comes and He sends his own representatives. If He does it forcibly, then it will become matter.

**Question to Śrīla Gurudev** - *Why does the soul not want to go to the spiritual world or know Krishna? Why does he come to the material world?*

When the soul is there, by the misuse of their relative independence, they become averse to Śrī Krishna, they want to enjoy this world. They have the aptitude to enjoy the world. Krishna has affection for his own sons. We are all sons of Krishna. So Krishna sends us into this material world to realise the fact and to practise, to go back home, back to Godhead (to achieve the real purpose of human life.) This is the greatest opportunity for the human being.

**Question to Śrīla Gurudev** - *Do conditioned souls come from Vaikuṇṭha?*

Not from Vaikuṇṭha. They come from taṭasthā śakti (marginal potency). Now when they come here, they desire. So Krishna created infinite brahmāṇḍas and created many species, "You go through it and enjoy if you want to." After enjoying, passing through eighty lakhs of births, through aquatics, animals, birds, trees, etc, when he gets this precious human birth, Krishna gives him discriminative power between eternal knowledge and non-eternal knowledge, "You think now. Do you want to enjoy this world or do you want to come to Me to worship Me?"

"No, I do not want this because there are many miseries. There are many births

and at the time of birth from mother's womb I had great pain there. And then, I got three-fold affliction. I do not want to remain."

**Then he can go to Vaikuṇṭha.**

**Question to Śrīla Gurudev** - *Why does Krishna want jīvas to come to Him? Is it that He is lacking something? Does He do it to seek rasa-exchange with the jīvas?*

He gives the opportunity to jīvas to get Him, to get His service. Jīvas are more benefited than Krishna. Because of Krishna, jīvas can come to Him and jīvas can taste the sweetness of Krishna by rendering service. Krishna is All-Existence, always nitya kiśore, always young. Krishna is not old and He remains always beautiful. Here we will find some people are very beautiful and after some time some disease comes, and they become so ugly. Do you not find? But Krishna will not become ugly, always beautiful. In all relationships, He is Supreme. You can love Him and you will be greatly benefited. Krishna has given us the scope, "You love Me. You have got the chance. I shall accept you as My servant, as My servitor to serve Me. I am giving you the opportunity, the greatest opportunity." But we are not taking that opportunity; we are running after this and that. We are getting afflictions. You start worshipping Krishna, see whether you are happy or not. Sincerely you try. Take absolute shelter of Him.

**Question to Śrīla Gurudev** - *Why does Mahamāya create a desire in us to be averse to the Lord, even though she is His servant?*

The definition of Bhagavān is as follows: Bhaga means 'opulences', and vān means 'one who possesses'. The Supreme Lord possesses not only six-fold, but infinite kinds of opulences. Amongst those opulences are the internal spiritual potencies, called antaraṅgā śakti, the external material potency called bahiraṅgā

śakti, and the marginal potency called jīva śakti. These three kinds of energies are relevant for the conditioned souls of this world. The internal potency and external potency are stated as Yogamāya and Mahamāya respectively. For instance we find that here in this world, the mother is affectionate to her child. Out of affection, the mother sometimes adores the child and sometimes slaps the child. Similarly, out of affection, the Supreme Lord punishes the conditioned souls for their misdeeds through Mahamāya, and adores and advises them through Yogamāya to submit to the Lord and worship Him.

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**Question to Śrīla Gurudev** - *I did a spiritual search in many religious faiths. I was not satisfied as they lack either spiritual science or devotion or both. When I read Gauḍīya literature, I liked them and developed inclination towards those teachings. Bless me so that I make progress in this path.*

## **Love for Śrī Krishna is inherent**

I have gotten the impression, by going through your letter, that you have some liking for devotion. It has been stated in authentic scriptures that without previous impressions of eternal good deeds, which you must have done knowingly or unknowingly, you cannot have such aptitude for worshipping Krishna with devotion. As such, in spite of your spiritual search in the teachings of other faiths, you are not satisfied. In fact, every living being has natural love for the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna in their real selves. Take for instance magnet and iron— magnet attracts iron and iron is attracted by magnet. This attraction is not seen when there is rust on the iron. If the dirt on the iron is removed, the iron will run towards the magnet. So, the Supreme Lord is Śrī Krishna, Who attracts all and pleases all. Other animated beings are kārṣṇa, who are attracted by Him. When by misuse of relative independence, the living entities became averse to Śrī Krishna, they were enveloped by the illusory energy of Supreme Lord and

they developed misidentification of self. Being victims of the illusory energy, they forget they are eternal servants of Śrī Krishna. They pass through cycles of births and deaths and ultimately become fortunate to obtain this human birth.

God has given human beings the discriminating power to understand good and bad, eternal and non-eternal. The human beings have the capacity to accept the Eternal Truth and give up non-eternal things. God was satisfied by creating human beings as they have the capacity to worship Him. This precious human birth is only meant for worship of the Supreme Lord.

Love for Śrī Krishna is inherent in every spirit soul. It is to be manifested by the company of bona fide devotees. It is stated in Chaitanya Charitāmrita, 'Pure devotion for Krishna always exists in the real self; it is not to be acquired'. It is revealed only through hearing from a true devotee with a sincere heart.

An awakened soul can awaken many other unawakened souls. When the eternal causeless devotion of the real self is awakened, nobody can stop the eagerness and perturbation of heart of that awakened soul. The Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna has said emphatically in the Gītā—'A sincere soul will never be deceived'. God is everywhere and His Grace Incarnate Vaiṣṇavas are also everywhere. God is Omnipresent, Omniscient and Omnipotent. As He is Complete Reality, He is also impartial. Nobody can do anything which is not in His knowledge.

It is necessary for the devotees to meet, at least once in a week, to practise principal devotional forms — 'śravan' and 'kīrtan'.

May All-Merciful Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga bless you.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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## **Attraction to Krishna is natural**

It comes to my mind, by going through your letter, about your intense desire to come to India to worship Śrī Gaura-Hari and Śrī Krishna. The Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna in fact, attracts all because of His Supreme Transcendental Qualities. The name Krishna denotes that He pleases all by attracting all. All others, other than the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna are being attracted by Him. As for example, it is the nature of a magnet to attract iron and it is the nature of iron to be attracted by a magnet. But when there is rust on the iron, this nature is not seen to be manifested. When the rust is removed, iron immediately runs towards the magnet. All living beings of this world, in their real selves, have attraction for Śrī Krishna i.e. have natural love for Śrī Krishna. It is not to be borrowed from somebody else. When a spirit soul, by the misuse of his relative independence, becomes averse to Śrī Krishna, he is enveloped by the illusory energy of the Supreme Lord and is hurled down into this world, which is an ocean of births and deaths. When a fortunate spirit soul, by the previous good impressions of eternal good deeds, comes in contact with the bona fide pure devotee, the eternal nature to love Krishna is awakened. Your feeling is applicable to all living beings of this universe. You are blessed as you have a natural inclination to worship Gaura-Hari and Śrī Krishna.

I have discussed about your desire to live permanently in India so as to be in a congenial atmosphere, associating with pure devotees because it is very difficult to get such congenial association at your place.

I am anxious to know about the present health condition of your wife. Hope this will find you all in good health and spirit.

May All Merciful Śrī Guru Gaurāṅga and Rādhā Krishna bless you.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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## **Love of God is intrinsic**

Revered affectionate mother,

I am in receipt of your affectionate letter by airmail, full of sweet words showered upon me like a true mother.

Although the Supreme Lord is the sustainer and maintainer of all living beings, in fact practically, in a worldly sense, household devotees are sustaining and maintaining the ascetics. I was away from Calcutta for about three weeks in our preaching tour in Assam— North-East India. We have four Maths in different places in Assam. Doctors have advised me not to undertake a hectic tour. But since many devotees were very eager for my presence in their places, our friends made arrangements for my preaching tour with the provisions of proper rest. So I beg to be excused for not being able to write to you earlier.

Love of God exists in every living being, they are not to borrow it from anybody. For example, the relationship between magnet and iron is natural — magnet attracts iron and iron is attracted by magnet. Somebody may say it is not so always. The cause of non- manifestation of attraction between magnet and iron is rust on the iron. If the rust is removed, mutual attraction will be manifested. The eternal nature of a living being's love for God is awakened in the association of a bona fide pure devotee. Amongst all living beings it is mainly possible within the human species, because human beings have the power of discrimination between good and bad, eternal and non-eternal. Only this human birth is suitable for worship of God. This human birth is not meant for eating, sleeping, defending and mating like other beasts and birds.

## Misuse of relative independence

When I was on a preaching tour in America, your affectionate son used to introduce me to others in every place speaking about the specialty of human birth. Though we are eternal servants of the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna when we become averse to Him by misuse of our relative independence, we are hurled down in this world - a prison house - to pass through cycles of births and deaths and suffer threefold affliction.

The Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna has emphatically said in the Gītā (7.14), 'daivī hy eṣā guṇa-mayī mama māyā duratyayā, mām eva ye prapadyante māyām etāṁ taranti te — It is almost impossible for the conditioned souls to cross over this ocean of births and deaths. But if anybody submits to Krishna wholeheartedly, Krishna will rescue him from the snare of Māyā (illusory energy of three primal qualities sattva, rajas and tamas).' Our actual relations are with the Supreme Lord, Śrī Krishna. Whatever physical relations we are seeing in this world are non-eternal and perishable. So if you want to love Krishna or serve Krishna as sincerely as the cows, the Lord can fulfil your desire. Actually all cows in Vrajamaṇḍal are not ordinary cows. Even ṛṣis and munis desire to be born as cows to serve Krishna.

Your writing is very inspiring. I am indebted to you for your affection. Please submit prayers to Nandanandan Śrī Krishna in favour of me so that I can serve Him as my Dearest Object of Worship. We are all busy here regarding the arrangements of circumambulation of Navadvīp dhām. We shall leave tomorrow for Śrī Mayapur.

May the All-Merciful Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga, Rādhā-Krishna bless your son and your daughter. My respect to you. Hope this will find you all in good health and spirit.

Affectionately yours,



Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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## **Love amongst all**

In the present age, nāma-sankīrtan is the best medicine and most effective way to achieve the summum bonum of human life as it can be performed under any circumstances. According to Lord Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, harinām sankīrtan is the strongest spiritual force on earth. It can establish love and unity of hearts amongst all human beings and thereby establish real peace in the world.

Love is superior to non-violence. Non-violence only implies to refrain from inflicting injury to others, while love is to do good to others. It is positive. When there is love, the question of inflicting injuries to any part of the object of love does not arise. If we can get love for Śrī Krishna, we cannot have the impetus to inflict injuries to any of His parts emanating from His marginal potency the living entities. All living entities are related to each other due to their common relationship to Śrī Krishna. Nāma-sankīrtan is a universal religion under whose banner people of all sects and rank can unite.

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## **Search for Truth**

Seeing the sad plight of the wretched creatures of Kaliyuga, the Supreme Lord, Śrī Krishna Himself, out of causeless mercy, appeared as Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu at Śrī Māyāpura, Nadia, West Bengal, India accepting the

complexion and mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, to rescue the fallen souls. When Lord Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu had His advent in 1486 A.D. Bengal was under the rule of a Muslim Emperor, Hussain Shah. Śrī Sanātana Goswāmī was his prime minister and Śrī Rūpa Goswāmī was an important and responsible administrator. Maldah was then capital of Bengal. Lord Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu first met Śrī Sanātana Goswāmī and Śrī Rūpa Goswāmī at Ramkeli village in the Maldah District. At the first sight, both were attracted by the highly impressive Divine Personality of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. He advised them to give up worldly life and join Him when He would proceed to Vrindāvana. Initially, Śrī Rūpa Goswāmī and his younger brother, Śrī Anupam, on getting information about Mahāprabhu's departure for Vrindāvana, left for Vrindāvana relinquishing household life. Later on, Śrī Sanātana Goswāmī, who was imprisoned by King Hussain Shah, somehow releasing himself from jail, left for Vrindāvana through a rural route, avoiding main thoroughfares. When he reached Benaras (Kāśī), he received information about Mahāprabhu's stay at the house of Śrī Chandra Shekhar Vaidya. He went there, humbly fell prostrated at the Lotus Feet of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu and enquired, "Who am I? Why am I being burned with threefold affliction? I do not know how I can get eternal welfare. I am not competent even to enquire about my ultimate goal of life and the means to attain it. Kindly instruct me all about the spiritual, fundamental principle."

Lord Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu is instructing all human beings through His personal associate, Śrī Sanātana Goswāmī that when anybody's time for getting emancipation from worldly bondage will come, he will have this theological inquiry to a bona fide guru (Divine Master). Lord Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu is playing the part of a guru and Sanātana Goswāmī that of a disciple. A true disciple should search for truth and enquire into the discrimination between the eternal and non-eternal.

Lord Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu gave replies to all the above questions - sambandha, abhidheya and prayojana. Sambandha - Knowledge of God, soul and world and mutual relationship; Abhidheya - engaging in the practical activities of devotional service; Prayojana - ultimate goal of life, the real necessity of life. The subject has been dealt with elaborately in the authentic scripture, Śrī Chaitanya Charitāmṛta, written by Śrī Krishnadas Kavirāja Goswāmī.

Elaborate discussion is not possible here. I am going to discuss some fundamental points of the subject in brief.

The Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna is the Ultimate Reality. He is the Prime Cause of all causes, God of all gods. He is the Origin of all. He has no origin. He is the Embodiment of All-Existence, All-Knowledge and All-Bliss. Śrī Krishna has infinite potencies. Of them the three principal potencies are:

- (i) Aantaraṅgā śakti — Internal Potency
- (ii) Bahiraṅgā śakti — External Potency
- (iii) Taṭasthā śakti — Marginal Potency.

My love to you all. May the All-Merciful Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga and Śrī Krishna bless you.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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## **Cause of affliction**

A woe-stricken person cannot speak on the subject, "Cause of Affliction and its

Remedy,” as he himself is under the grip of suffering. As an entrant (novice) to a spiritual organisation for cultivation of devotion to God, it is the holy mandate of my Most Revered Divine Master and other Revered vaiṣṇavas to recite what I have heard so far from the holy lips of my Divine Master and Revered vaiṣṇavas. The recapitulation of the sayings of the Divine Master and Revered vaiṣṇavas, as well as the Divine message of authentic scriptures descending through preceptorial line, will purify my mind and bestow on me all spiritual attainments. It is the best devotional means for me.

Our Most Revered Divine Master, while delivering sermons, used to quote evidence from the eleventh canto of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, the quintessence of all scriptures, relevant to this subject. Nine munis (saints), the youngest group of sons of Śrī Rishabh Deva, renowned as Navayogendra, once set their holy feet in the yajña- sthali (place of sacrifice) of Śrī Nimi, Emperor of Videha (modern Mithila - North Bihar, India). Emperor Nimi cordially received them with profound devotion and reverential gesture of getting up, washing their lotus feet and worshipping them with offerings. Emperor Nimi asked nine questions and the nine saints gave their replies one by one. One of the queries was:

*yathaitām aiśvarīm māyām dustarām akṛtātmabhiḥ taranty añjaḥ sthūla-dhiyo maharṣa idam ucyatām*

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 11.3.17)

O Saints! I am a dullard having attachment to this body and to persons related to this body. I have no control over senses. It is impossible for me to rescue myself from the clutches of the deluding external potency of the Lord having three primal qualities of sattva, rajaḥ and tamaḥ, i.e., preserving, creating and destroying qualities. Birth, existence and death are caused by the deluding force of the Lord's external potency. We suffer at the time of birth and death as well as during existence. As long as we live in this world, we suffer threefold afflictions - (i) affliction caused by physical ailments and mental sufferings such as grief due to the separation from near and dear ones; (ii) affliction caused by other living beings; (iii) affliction caused by demigods, i.e., natural calamities -

earthquakes, inundation, famine, epidemics, drought, deluge, etc. Kindly show me the simple path to get deliverance from the forest fire of worldly affliction.

Prabuddha Muni, one of the nine saints, replied –

*karmāṇy ārabhamāṇānāṃ duḥkha-hatyai sukhāya ca paśyet pāka-viparyāsaṃ  
mithunī-cāriṇām nṛṇām*

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 11.3.18)

A man starts a profession or business, weds or does not wed with the sole purpose of removing affliction and getting happiness. When he finds that he is unable to remove affliction and get happiness by his own effort, he marries and becomes two to try jointly to remove affliction and get happiness. Even then when he is unsuccessful he begets children and increases the number of family members, to try with joint efforts to attain the objective. But, O Videha Rāj Nimi! Behold! The result is just the reverse, neither he can remove affliction nor he can get happiness.

## **Money, the source of misery**

*nityārtidena vittena durlabhenātmā-mṛtyunā grhāpatyāpta-paśubhiḥ kā prītiḥ  
sādhitaiś calaiḥ*

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 11.3.19)

An enslaved jīva (individual conscious unit), overwhelmed by the external deluding potency of the Lord wrongly conceives himself as the master and has the ego to enjoy the world. As such he thinks he will be happy if he can get objects of enjoyment and become master. Both can be achieved by amassing

wealth. So, he takes pains in accumulating money more and more. But, O Nimi Maharāj! Carefully note money itself is a cause of pain to those craving for enjoyment and mastery. If we do not get money we become unhappy as our desires will not be fulfilled. If we get money, then also we are worried for its preservation. If money acquired is lost, we mourn. Worldly things are such, if we do not get them we are unhappy; if we get them we are worried (unhappy); if we lose them we mourn (unhappy). Money constantly gives us trouble. Yet money is so dear to us that we are bent on earning money, even at the cost of our life, as in the case of thieves, servants and merchants. Then that hard-earned money is spent for building houses to live comfortably, for bringing up children, maintaining kinsmen and domestic animals. But all these are non-eternal—ephemeral. What happiness or benefit can we derive out of it? — things. nothing. No one can get even an iota of happiness from worldly transitory

*evam lokam param vidyān naśvaram karma-nirmitam sa-tulyātiśaya-dhvaṁsam  
yathā maṇḍala-vartinām*

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 11.3.20)

We may say, we may not be happy here in this world but we shall be happy if we go to higher worlds. But the higher worlds are attained by karma, by material efforts or by material actions. Rivalry, emulation, and fights amongst equals and malice or animosity towards superiors exist there also as we experience in this world.

## **Expert spiritual doctor**

*tasmād gurum prapadyeta jijñāsuḥ śreya uttamam śābde pare ca niṣṇātam  
brahmaṇy upaśamāśrayam*

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 11.3.21)

Therefore, if we sincerely want actual bliss, we should give up our arrogance that we can get it by our own efforts. We should take absolute shelter at the lotus feet of gurudev (Divine Master), who will be indicated by the attributes of being well-versed in the Vedas (Holy Writings) and equivalent scriptures, receiving transcendental divine messages through the preceptorial line, as well as having realisation of the Divinity. We should enquire from Him about our eternal benefit.

A diseased person, who has no knowledge of medical science is incapable of treating himself and has to go to an expert doctor for treatment. The doctor examines him and diagnoses the disease then prescribes medicines and diet. If the ailing person follows his advice and undergoes treatment, he gets cured. Similarly, we have to go to an expert spiritual doctor, a bona fide guru (Divine Master), who knows the cause of the malady of worldly affliction. He can correctly prescribe the panacea for the definite cure of the disease of the cycle of birth and death. However it is very difficult to get a bona fide guru at the present sinful black age (Kaliyuga) of corruption. In fact, it is stated in the scriptures that there may be many so-called gurus to grab money from disciples. A bona fide guru who can dispel all afflictions is rarely to be found. If we want quality, we have to sacrifice quantity.

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## **Bringing hearts together**

Revered affectionate mother,

Received your kind letter sent by post and noted the contents.

Actually, love of God, Śrī Krishna, is inherent in every individual soul. Due to

forgetfulness of our relation with Śrī Krishna, we are enveloped by the illusory energy consisting of three primal qualities, sattva, rajas, and tamas, and pass through cycles of births, deaths and threefold afflictions. An illustration of magnet and iron is given to understand it easily (also written to you in detail in my previous letter). Love of God is not to be borrowed from somebody, only it is to be awakened by the company of a pure bonafide devotee. We have got our actual, eternal & all kinds of love relations with Krishna. When we forget the actual relation with Krishna, we are under the false egos of this material world, having false material relations and false interests. So we find everywhere in the prison house, this world, severe clashing of interests. This is the greatest infliction of punishment on conditioned souls for their aversion to the Supreme Lord. In this context, I remember the teachings of our Most Revered Gurudev, which I also had the scope to submit to the learned dignitaries of the function solemnised on the occasion of the 106th Advent Anniversary of Paramgurudev Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Goswāmī Ṭhākura at Puri. The relevant portion of my submission is as follows.

'We have been brought physically nearer by science but our hearts are further apart now. Cultivation of love can remove this distance between hearts. Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Goswāmī Prabhupād preached the Doctrine of Divine Love of Lord Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. Love for Śrī Krishna, the Absolute Whole, will foster love for all. Non-violence is automatic in the culture of pure love. Love of God is the greatest spiritual force on earth which can bring unity of hearts among all human beings. Cultivation of Love for Śrī Krishna, 'Krishna-prema,' is to be widely propagated for bringing abiding peace in the hearts of the people, which is the basis for progress of human civilisation. Amongst all spiritual practices, nāma-sankīrtan is the best and most effective sādhanā to attain Krishna-prema in Kaliyuga. This spiritual practice of Nāma-sankīrtan is a universal religion. Under this banner people of all sects and ranks can unite.

You wrote in your letter that Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Goswāmī Ṭhākura has his samādhi temple in Sarbhog, Assam, which you didn't know earlier. I am to say in regard to this, the original samādhi temple is at Śrī Māyāpur, District Nadia, West Bengal. The samādhi mandir at Sarbhog is the puṣpa-samādhi



temple (floral remnants brought from the original samādhi temple at Śrī Māyāpur).

Due to your affection for me, you are worried upon hearing about my illness and blood transfusion into me. I am reaping the fruits of my own actions. Nobody is to be blamed for this. I was deprived from participating in the holy festivals of the Maṭhs and preaching centers in North-India and to get the company of the devotees there. As per doctor's advice, I had to restrict my movements and participation in functions. I had to return to Calcutta for climatic change and for complete rest. I am allowed to attend only special functions to meet the devotees and to get some opportunity to sing the glories of the Supreme Lord. It is my good fortune that in spite of my being a conditioned soul and having so many drawbacks, you have got so much affection for me. You have showered your heart's blessings unto me without hesitation. This human body is non-eternal. That which is born or produced, will ultimately die or will be destroyed. Nobody can remain in this world eternally with this temporary body. I implore you, kindly submit your prayer to Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna so that I can attain Him as prāṇapati, Dearest Object of Worship. Kindly communicate my love to your son, daughter and to all others. Hope this will find you in good health and spirit.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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**Question to Śrīla Gurudev** – *Please enlighten me on Jīva Tattva. I consider you as a tattva- darshee and I will take your version as that of the scripture.*

**Jīva tattva**

Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna and the jīvas are eternally related with each other. Lord Śrī Chiatanya Mahaprabhu has termed this relation as acintya-bhedābheda. This means we are different and simultaneously non-different from Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna.

When I was at home I had several doubts about jīva-tattva, bhagvaad-tattva, etc. in my mind and I used to write letters to my Most Revered Śrīla Gurudev. One time Śrīla Gurudev asked me to read 'Jaiva-dharma', written by Śrīla Bhaktivinode Ṭhākura. I went to a library and got that book. When the book was issued to me, the librarian said, “You are the first person who has asked for this book. So far no one has got this book issued.” When I read 'Jaiva dharma', all my doubts about jīva-tattva and bhagavad-tattva were clarified. You may also read Jaiva-dharma. You will get all the answers to your questions because Śrīla Bhaktivinode Ṭhākura is not an ordinary human being. He is Śrī Kamala Manjari in Goloka-līla.

## **Human birth is very rare**

The jīvas here means all the living entities, including beasts and birds. There are 8,400,000 kinds of living entities. In Viṣṇu Purāṇa it is said:

*jalajā nava lakṣāni sthāvara lakṣa viṁśati krmayo rudra-sankhyakaḥ pakṣinām  
daśa lakṣaṇaṁ trimśal lakṣāni paśavaḥ catur lakṣāni mānuṣaḥ*

There are 900,000 kinds of aquatics, 2,000,000 kinds of trees and plants, 1,100,000 kinds of insects and reptiles, 1,000,000 kinds of birds, 3,000,000 kinds of four-legged beasts, and 400,000 kinds of human species.

The human birth is very rare and one should not lose this precious opportunity. Only human beings have got the capacity to worship Supreme Lord. Other living entities have got no capacity. So it is not wise to lose the precious human birth for mundane pleasures.

## **Immediately start bhajan**

In Śrīmad Bhagavatam (11.9.29) it is said,

*labdhvā sudurlabham idaṁ bahu-sambhavānte mānuṣyam arthadam anityam  
apīha dhīraḥ tūrṇaṁ yateta na pated anumṛtyu yāvan niḥśreyasāya viṣayaḥ  
khalu sarvataḥ syāt*

'After innumerable births, we have been born as human beings. Therefore, this human birth is very rare. Although it is impermanent, it bestows the highest benefit of serving Supreme Lord and to get the highest object permanently. It is the actual duty of all human beings to try utmost to achieve the highest welfare. Therefore a person who has got the actual knowledge will endeavor for highest eternal welfare before another death occurs because in all other births we can get connection with non-eternal worldly objects, which cause intense suffering. But the actual eternal welfare is not possible in other births.'

Our Most Revered Paramguru-Pādapadma Nitya-līlā Praviṣṭa Om 108 Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura Prabhupād had spoken on the above verse continuously for a month at Ulaṭaṅga, Kolkata. In spite of that he was not satisfied. Two students of Scottish Church College, Kolkata went there to see. Our Most Revered Śrīla Paramgurudev said that even a moment of human birth should not be wasted. The two students said that they have come only to see what was happening there and that they have to go back to their homes.

Śrīla Prabhupād said, “tūrṇaṁ – immediately you should start the worship of Supreme Lord.”

The two students then said, “Oh! Our house is burning.” Śrīla Prabhupād, “Let it burn.”

The students, “Our neighboring houses will get burnt.”

Śrīla Prabhupād, “Let the entire world burn. You are brahma-bhūta (of the Lord and from the Lord), not saṁsāra- bhūta (of this world and from this world).”

Later the two students stayed in the Maṭh.

Śrī Prahlād Maharāj instructs in Śrīmad Bhagavatam (7.6.1)

*kaumāra ācaret prājño dharmān bhāgavatān iha durlabhaṁ mānuṣaṁ janma tad apy adhruvam arthadam*

‘One who is sufficiently intelligent should use the human form of body from the tender age of childhood to practice the activities of devotional service, giving up all other engagements. The human body is most rarely achieved, and although temporary like other bodies, it is meaningful because in human life one can perform devotional service.’

Hence it is unwise to use this human birth, which is rare, for transitory happiness. We may lose this opportunity any time. We will fall down to lower species.

## **Pastime of king Bharat**

It happened with king Bharat. He left his kingdom and family to worship Supreme Lord. In the forest when he went to fetch some water, he saw a pregnant female deer jumping over the water stream. She gave birth to a child-deer and died. Thinking that the child is motherless, he started taking care of him and in the process he got attached to the child-deer. Since he remembered the deer at the time of his death, he had to take birth as deer in his next life. But he remembered his past life and also the reason for his birth as a deer. He did not mix with other deers, instead associated with sadhus. In his subsequent next life he became Jaḍa Bharat and attained Lord.

My love to you all. May the All-Merciful Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga and Śrī Krishna bless you.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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## PART 2 Medicine for the Mind

Without taking medicine nobody can be cured. Without doing anything positively, we cannot get effective result. In spite of our evil desires imbibed in the mind through cycles of births and deaths, we should not stop our bhajan.

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**Question to Srila Gurudev** - *(1) My mind is filled with many unwanted desires and it oscillates making me feel good and at times bad about me. I cannot control my senses and I am afraid of spiritual fall. In theory, I know the goal of life but my actions are not consistent with the goal. I also feel bogged down with everyday problems. I know only pure devotion is the solution to all my problems but how can I receive mercy from pure devotees with my undesirable wants! (2) I am praying to you for some kind of service by which I can engage my mind and by which my other desires will go away so that I can get devotion and harmonise my life and become a good practitioner of bhakti yoga.*

### Controlling mind

Received your letter dated and noted the contents. You have expressed your heart openly in your letter. Whatever you have written is the problem of all conditioned souls of the world, at least those who are aspirants - votaries.

I have the opportunity, in this context, to remember the teachings of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna in His reply to the question of Sri Arjuna in the Gita, 6.34:

*arjuna uvaca*

*cancalam hi manah krsna pramathi balavad drdham tasyaham nigraham manye  
vayor iva su-duskaram*

Purport of the verse with two implications: - Sri Arjuna said:

(1) “O Lord Krishna! You have already instructed me that by the discriminating power of intelligence between good and evil, right and wrong one should restrain or regulate the mind. But I fear that mind has the power even to crush our conscience or discriminating capability. Therefore, it seems extremely difficult for me to control the mind, which may be compared with the useless endeavour to restrain the velocity of the wind”.

(2) “O Lord Krishna! You have already instructed me to attain maintenance of balance, he who realises joy and sorrows equally with all living beings in this world is a best yogi. But in spite of that, I fear my mind has got the power even to crush the maintenance of balance. Therefore, it appears extremely difficult for me to control the mind as it is compared with the difficulty to restrain the velocity of wind”.

*sri-bhagavan uvaca*

*asamsayam maha-baho mano durnigraham calam abhyasena tu kaunteya  
vairagyena ca grhyate*

(Bhagavad Gita 6.35)

“O mahabaho (chief of heroes)! I admit whatever you have stated is true but it is the special instruction of yogasastra that the restless mind, which is difficult to resist, can be brought under control gradually by repeated devotional practice as well as non- attachment to worldly (non-eternal) objects”.

The Sanskrit word 'vairagya' has got two implications - (1) non-attachment to worldly non-eternal objects and (2) positive significance, attachment to the Supreme Lord 'visiste parampiiruse ragah, tasya bhavah vairagya'. As much attachment as a votary shall have for the Supreme Lord, so much detachment he will obtain from non-eternal objects of the world.

When a child tries to stand up and to walk, he falls on the ground a hundred times, yet when he does not stop trying ultimately he succeeds. If a child, after trying several times, stops trying further, he will never be able to stand up and

walk.

One who wants unfailing positive eternal welfare should go through the instruction of the following verse of Kathopanisad very carefully:-

*sreyas ca preyas ca manusyam etas tau samparltya vivinakti dhirah sreya hi  
dhiro 'bhipreyaso vrnite preyo mando yogakseman vrnite*

(Kathopanisad 1.2.2)

## **Quality is better than quantity**

Kathopanisad ascertains two paths - (1) path for eternal welfare and (2) path for hedonism (belief in worldly pleasure as the proper aim). These two paths only exist in the human species. The wise human beings after knowing the proper implications of these two paths consider the path of eternal welfare as the cause of emancipation and the other path of hedonism as the cause of bondage. They adore the path of eternal welfare relinquishing the path of hedonism. But unfortunate and unscrupulous persons lacking in conscience, accepting the path of hedonism, engage all their energy only to accumulate material wealth and preserve wealth and property thus acquired only to get immediate benefit of sense enjoyments without thinking about its consequence. More than ninety-nine percent of people in this world are supporters of hedonism. It seems like nectar at the time of sensuous pleasure but its consequence is deadly poison. In the path of eternal welfare, at the time of spiritual practice, it appears to be like poison because the votary has to control his sense organs and has to restrict his evil propensities but the consequence of such austerities and self-discipline is ambrosia. Sincere devotees of such a path of eternal welfare are very rare in this world, which is like a prison house.

Devotees in the highest degree are less in number. We are not to give importance to increase numbers. One person of good character can do good to numerous persons but millions of characterless persons cannot do any good even to a single person in this world. If we are very particular to increase the quantity, we are to sacrifice quality. By that what actual benefit we shall get? A pure devotee



suddha bhakta - is very rare in this world.

## Special Kaliyuga

The present Kaliyuga (Iron Age), of the seventh Manvantar, has a very special significance as the most Munificent Form of Godhead, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, appeared in this Kaliyuga and distributed Krishna-prema (Universal Divine Love) to all irrespective of nationality, geographical barriers etc. The most fortunate persons in this age should take this opportunity and pray to All-Merciful God immediately by uttering from the core of the heart 'Ha Nityananda! Ha Gauranga!' with firm belief, by taking absolute shelter at Their Lotus Feet. You will find its reference in the hymns of Sri Narottam Thakur about the glories of Sri Gauranga and Sri Nityananda. I heard those songs in many places in foreign countries '*je gauranger nama loy tar hay premoday*'; '*grihe va vane thako ha gauranga bole dako*'; '*nitai pada- kamala, koti-candra susitala, ye chayaya jagat judaya'hena nitai bine bhai radha- krishna paite nai*'; '*nitai na balila mukhe majila samsar sukhe vidya kule ki karibe tar*'. [Significance of the above quotations of Bengali songs : 'Divine love will be manifested in him who utters the holy name of Sri Gauranga'.

'Whether one lives in the house or in the forest, (signifying living with non-attachment) one should utter the Holy Name Gauranga addressing with separation grief 'Ha Gauranga!'. 'The Lotus Feet of Sri Nityananda are supremely pleasant and cooling, like the charming delightfulness of millions of moonlights, and under whose sweet shelter the whole world will be allayed from sufferings and pain and without whose grace nobody can get actual contact with Radha-Krishna<sup>1</sup>. 'One who does not utter the Holy Name 'Nitai<sup>1</sup> - will be utterly ruined, being attracted by non-eternal worldly enjoyments and by acquiring so called worldly learning and family dignity'.

I think you have gone through the biography of the great household devotee Ambarisa Maharaj in Srlmad Bhagavatam, written by Veda-Vyas Muni. He conquered all desires gradually, by engaging all sense organs for the service of

the Supreme Lord. Without devotional practice nobody can achieve the objective. With patience and tenacity of purpose, an aspirant can be successful in achieving the desired objective.

I am somehow pulling on. I may have to go to New Delhi towards the end of this month to discuss my health with the doctors.

Hope, this will find you all in good health and spirit. My love to you all.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

P.S.: Spiritual sound and material sound are completely different. As the Supreme Lord is Absolute Complete Reality, His Name, Form, Attributes and Pastimes are identical. For example, the word 'water' does not indicate the thing 'water'. By uttering the word 'water' several times one cannot quench his thirst, so the word 'water' itself is not the thing 'water'. But the Name of the Supreme Lord and the Named (object indicated by name Supreme Lord) are identical. When the Holy Name will be uttered without offence the Name, Form, Attributes, Pastimes - all will be manifested gradually in the same order.

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## **The heart disease**

The heart disease of every jiva is kama (lust or passion). An enslaved jiva cannot conquer kama by his own capacity. We become victims of kama when we become averse to Sri Krishna. This punishment has been inflicted upon those, who, being the eternal servants of Sri Krishna, are reluctant to serve Him. If the root cause of passion is not eradicated, how can we conquer kama? When we become averse to Sri Krishna and want to enjoy Maya, Maya immediately envelops us and we get false egos relating to subtle and gross bodies. As such, we are passing through cycles of births since time immemorial and burning in the conflagration of births and deaths and threefold afflictions. The only way of getting emancipation from worldly suffering is total unconditional surrender to

the Lotus Feet of Sri Krishna.

As we have inherited the egoistic mentality, passing through many lives, it is not easy to give up all mundane egos and take absolute unconditional shelter at the Lotus Feet of Sri Krishna. Association of bona fide suddha bhaktas is essential for getting enhancement in spiritual life. We cannot get the desired result all of a sudden. It requires time. It depends upon the intensity of the sadhana. Even Ambarisa Maharaj, a great devotee, could only conquer all kara gradually. We are to continue to perform sadhana with steadfast belief and patience. It is better to go through bhakta-charitras—biographies of devotees in Srlmad Bhagavatam—as we get impetus from bhaktas how they attained God.

When one can see drawbacks and painfulness of enjoyment, one cannot willfully take recourse to this. An enslaved jiva cannot rescue himself from the clutches of Maya by his own capability, as long as he remains averse to Sri Krishna. Every enslaved jiva is attracted by lust - desire for money, women, name and fame. Only a sincere and completely surrendered soul can rescue himself from the clutches of Maya by the grace of Sri Krishna and His Absolute Counterpart, Gurudev. Saranagati is the Divine Panacea of all diseases. Invoking 'Sri Krishna' from the core of the heart is the best expression of saranagati.

I am worried to know the deteriorated condition of your health and the health of your wife. This world is not the permanent place of our stay. That which is born will die one day. The wise do not mourn for that which is inevitable. Jivas come and go as per desire of Supreme Lord Sri Krishna. Out of ignorance we think them to be ours and become attached to them. All jivas are eternally related with Sri Krishna. When jivas, by their relative independence, become averse to Sri Krishna they become enveloped by the illusory energy of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna and pass through cycles of births and deaths. We have this precious human birth to rescue ourselves from this severe bondage and take absolute shelter at the Lotus Feet of Sri Krishna, which can only bestow us absolute bliss.

May All-Merciful Sri Guru-Gauraiiga and Radha-Krishna bless you. My love to you all.

Affectionately yours,

B. B. Tirtha

## On depression

I am in receipt of your letter. I am worried to learn of your wife's sudden depression. It is nothing unusual. Conditioned souls with the wrong conception of self may come into the grip of such depression. Eating, sleeping, defending etc. are the characteristics of all living beings, including human beings. Human beings are distinct from other living beings in the sense that they have the power of discrimination between good and bad, eternal and non-eternal. The root cause of all our distress is aversion to the Supreme Lord. The moment a conditioned soul becomes averse to Sri Krishna, illusory energy envelops him and that causes misidentification of self and due to that there are non-eternal desires relating to the gross body and subtle body. As long as misconception of self persists, there cannot be an actual remedy for all kinds of distress and depression. Vaishnavas generally advise anybody who is in distress, to remember Narasimhadeva. For remembrance, utterance of Narasimha mantra is essential. Narasimhadeva removes all anti-devotional desires so that the sincere aspirants can remove the root cause of suffering— 'aversion to Supreme Lord Sri Krishna<sup>1</sup>. Simultaneously it may also give non-eternal benefits. Utterance of the Holy Name should be from the core of the heart, with firm belief.

True vaisnavas do not want to disturb their object of worship, the Supreme Lord and His Absolute Counterpart gurudev, for their worldly difficulties. If they require any kind of relief from physical disease, they take the help of physicians. I am not a doctor of the physical diseases, but I suggest that by taking doctor's advice, she can take medicine. Some sort of family difficulty can cause tension in the mind. Composed persons can withstand that.

Arrangements are being made to take out a huge sankirtan procession with 108 mridangas, band parties of Punjab and Assam etc. on the occasions of the Advent

Anniversary of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Centennial celebration of gurudev and Visva-Vaishnav-Rajsabha Meeting. There is also an arrangement made for distributing Prasad, on Jagannatha Misra's Ananda Festival Day, to countless numbers of devotees. I have heard that you will also participate in this Navadvlp

dham parikrama and Centennial Function. We will leave from Calcutta for Sri Mayapur on 17th March, 2005. We are so so.

My love to you all. May All-Merciful Supreme Lord Sri Guru-Gaurariga and Radha Krishna bless you all.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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**Question to Srila Gurudev** - *Why bad things happen to me regularly? Sometimes accidents and other times physical abuse. I was attacked and escaped death. I wanted to attend Hari-Kirtan and Hari-Katha. Now I am afraid to attend programmes because they finish late at night.*

## **The only piety in Kaliyuga**

Received your letter dated \_\_\_\_\_. I am shocked to go through the contents of your

letter. I did not receive such letter earlier. Every heinous crime is possible in this Kaliyuga (black age). We are hearing such events almost daily in newspapers. Time of this material world is divided into four divisions in our Indian scriptures—Satya, Treta, Dvapara and Kali. In western countries, it is generally accepted as Golden Age, Silver Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age. Time duration may vary in Indian and western systems. There is gradual degradation of piety from Satya Yuga to Kali Yuga. In Satya Yuga there are four kinds of piety—penance, sanctity, compassion and truth. In Treta Yuga there are three kinds of piety, in Dvapara Yuga two kinds of piety and in the most deteriorated Kali Yuga only one piety, truthfulness—the Holy Name. Therefore, most of the people have a criminal propensity.

It is due to the fruits of our previous actions that we are getting attacked by aforesaid environment. You have rightly written, “I understand this to be the result of my previous deeds - karma”. Sunlti Devi, mother of devotee Dhruva Maharaj, consoled her son by saying that, “You must have done in your previous birth such behaviour to somebody. Through your stepmother Suruchi you have now got that sort of harsh misbehaviour.”

*mamangalam tata paresu mamstha bhunkte jano yat para-dukhadas tat*

(Srimad Bhagavatam 4.8.17)

“O beloved son! Don't blame others for your distress. Whatever misbehavior one inflicts to others, that sort of behavior will rebound to him.”

Even Narada Goswami repeated the same words to pacify Dhruva and advised him to efface all hostile mentalities to anybody in this world and invoke Sri Hari from the core of the heart, so that all his obstacles would be removed and he would get the objective. The Supreme Lord is impartial and equal to all. The special characteristic of Dhruva is that he accepted in total the teachings of his mother Suniti Devi and guru Narada Goswami.

This world is the prison house of prisoners to get punishment for being averse to Sri Krishna. This world is not the place for getting actual peace or bliss. Sri Krishna has said in the Gita, 7.14 —

*daivi hy esa guna-mayi mama maya duratyaya, mam eva ye prapadyante mayam etarh taranti te*

“It is very difficult for conditioned souls to surmount My illusory energy (External Potency consisting of three primal qualities — sattva, rajah and tamah.) By Rajoguna jivas are born, by Satvaguna they are sustained and by Tamoguna, they are destroyed. Only souls completely surrendered to Me can be rescued from the clutches of Maya.” Here also Sri Krishna has said emphatically that any living being who takes shelter of His Lotus Feet sincerely, will be rescued.

Further, it is my advice you should also utter four pranam-mantras of Sri Narasimha Deva, Panchatattva and lastly Mahamantra while going to bed and on

rising up from the bed regularly. It will be better to utter instead of doing silently. These holy sounds of the mantras will remove all obstacles and also sanctify the environment. In addition to this, you count Harinam (Mahamantra) on beads as much as you can afford to do but without tenfold offences and with absorption of mind. Of course, without counting on beads, you can do Harinam always.

May All-Merciful Sri Guru-Gauranga and Radha-Krishna bless you.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

N.B: Utterance of the Holy Names of Sri Nitai-Gauranga - the Most Munificent Forms of Godhead - is the best and most powerful panacea to fight against the most vitiated influence of Kali.

## **Surrender - the only panacea**

Received your letter and noted the contents. We had seen you actively participating in our first preaching tour and also you sponsored the first tour in \_\_\_\_\_. I became worried when I did not see your participation in our next tour programme in \_\_\_\_\_.

When I inquired about you, I was told that you were in great difficulty due to worldly problems. You were so enthusiastic in attending all the programmes in the first tour, but your absence in the last tour programme was felt by me.

This material world is full of problems. Nobody on earth can avoid it. There are ups and downs in this world. The Supreme Lord, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, has said "This world is like a forest fire and chanting the 'Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare, Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare' Mahamantra will extinguish the forest fire".

The difference between a realised soul and conditioned soul in this world is that the realised soul, by the grace of the Supreme Lord, has the capacity to tolerate all afflictions and tribulations, but a conditioned soul cannot. A conditioned soul,

remaining in darkness, cannot solve any problem. When light comes, problems created by darkness are automatically removed. Parampujyapad Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj, quoted in one of his sermons, “When one is enlightened by knowledge by which ignorance is destroyed, then his knowledge reveals everything, as sun lights up everything at daytime”.

The Supreme Lord, Who is All-Bliss, is self-effulgent. He descends to a completely surrendered soul. As for instance, Prahlad Maharaj, who was apparently in a problem of extreme torture by his own father and was surrounded by hostile demons, was always in peace because of his total submission to the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna; he never became unbalanced.

Our Most Revered Gurudev used to advise us 'Finite human beings, when they take any decision by their finite intellect and wisdom for their benefit, they commit mistakes and the result can be opposite. But if we take absolute shelter of the Lotus Feet of Guru- Vaisnava-Bhagavan then, by Their grace, the light of transcendental knowledge will descend to our heart and solve all the problems. In my life I have practical experience of it. I think someone has already advised you to remember four Narasimha mantras followed by panchatattva and mahamantra, each four times, before going to bed and after rising up from bed and also if possible while going out to do any work. It is better to utter those mantras so that the holy sound will purify the atmosphere, remove obstacles and bestow to you the mental power to tolerate.

May Supreme Lord Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu and Radha-Krishna bless you.  
My love to you.

Affectionately yours,

B.B. Tirtha

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**Question to Srila Gurudev** - *Please save us from anarthas. Please teach us to serve vaisnavas, to become humble and surrendered.*



## **Fulfilling lust is like pouring ghee onto fire**

There is one illustration in Srimad Bhagavatam that Sri Yayati Maharaj could not satisfy his sexual lust even by prolonging his youth, by getting the young age from his youngest son, Puru, for one thousand years. He came to sense, after one thousand years, that he took a wrong path and ultimately gave up completely the appetite for sexual pleasure. He declared “*na jatu kamah kamanam upabhogena samyad havisa krsna- vartmeva bhuya evabhivardhate*”. If anybody goes on pouring ghee (clarified butter) onto the fire, that fire will go on increasing. In like manner, if we go on giving impetus to sexual pleasure it will go on increasing and we will not be delivered from this evil propensity. Our Most Revered Gurudev used to advise us by giving the example, if a huge amount of ghee, say a thousand kg of ghee is poured on the fire, the fire will be extinguished. The only way of extinguishing the desire for sexual pleasure and other desires is to have extreme longing for getting the Supreme Lord, who is Absolute and Complete Reality.

## **Need of sadhu-sanga**

To get this extreme desire for realisation of a relationship with the God, association with bona fide devotee sadhus is absolutely necessary. Not being able to get the direct association of bona fide sadhus, the only other way is to go on praying for the grace of the realised souls like our Most Revered Gurudev, Most Revered Paramgurudev, other guruvargas, six Goswamis and such established realised souls. The Personal Associates of the Supreme Lord may appear anytime, anywhere to rescue the fallen souls if sincerely prayed for.

Further, I think you are repeating four Narasimha mantras and each mantra at least four times and after that panchatattva and mahamantra four times, while going to bed in the night and utter those mantras.

rising up in the morning. You will get immediate effect if you If loud utterance is not possible, at least you should utter those mantras in a low voice. The

Transcendental sound of utterance of Holy Names can remove the pollution of material sounds.

## **Positive devotional practice**

We should always remember the highest ideal of devotion of Ambarisa Maharaj, narrated in Srimad Bhagavatam, 9th Canto. He engaged all his sense organs, his mind and objects of sense organs for the service of Sri Krishna continuously, without any interruption. By that he was able to conquer all kinds of worldly desires completely. As Ambarisa Maharaj engaged all his sense organs and especially the master of sense organs, mind, towards thinking about the service of the Lord, he had no scope of imbibing material desires into his heart.

Positive devotional spiritual practice is more effective than the negative way of practice i.e. practising detachment from evil desires. If we do not do positive devotional practice, how can we remove evil desires from the mind. Pariksit Maharaj, by hearing the Transcendental Hari-katha from Sukadev Goswami sincerely and most attentively with concentration, continuously for one week, could achieve the ultimate objective. Sukadev Goswami imparted the holy ideas. The Holy Divine ideas entering into the heart removed all non-eternal evil ideas. Non-eternal evil ideas are light and Transcendental Divine ideas are heavy. For example, if a heavy object is dropped into a tank of water, water being light will be purged out. However, a speaker of Hari-katha should be a realised soul like Sukadev Goswami.

## **Amar bhajan**

When darkness of ignorance envelops the whole world, no enslaved jivas of this world can rescue us, only the appearance of the Supreme Lord or His Personal Associates can. For this reason, the God, Himself sometimes appears in the world or as per His direction; His personal associates appear to rescue the fallen

souls. When we do not get contact with personal associates of the Supreme Lord, we have got no other way except going through their precepts i.e., their writings. Therefore, occasionally I remember the precepts of our Most Revered Gurudev. Recently, I read and discussed His own writing “Amar Bhajan - My Worship” at Chandigarh, which can rectify us. Actually, those words had a great impact on the minds of the listeners or votaries - sincere seekers of Truth. I have the desire to translate those most impressive teachings of Srila Gurudev into english but as ill luck would have it, I have no spare time and no competency to do this. I also fear my translation may not be as effective as the words of gurudev.

Lastly, as without taking medicine nobody can be cured, without doing positively anything, we cannot get effective result. In spite of our evil desires imbibed in the mind through cycles of births and deaths, we should not stop our bhajan.

May All-Merciful Sri Guru-Gauranga and Radha-Krishna bless you. My love to you all.

Affectionately yours,

B. B. Tirtha

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## **Controlling the restless mind**

Our minds are preoccupied with thoughts of the world. We cannot totally eradicate these worldly, unholy ideas all of a sudden. It will take time. It depends upon the intensity of sadhana. Even maha-bhagwat Ambarisa Maharaj could not remove worldly ideas in a day; he also could only remove these ideas gradually. The more you will imbibe divine ideas in your mind, the more worldly ideas will be purged out. This is the only way, applicable to all. You are not to be disheartened; with enthusiasm you have to do sadhana. You are to remember the teachings of Srila Rupa Goswami in Upadesamrta -

*utsahan niscayad dhairyat tat-tat-karma-pravartanat sanga-tyagat sato vrtteh  
sadbhir bhaktih prasidhyati*

“These six principles assure the complete success of pure devotional service: (1) being enthusiastic, (2) endeavoring with confidence, (3) being patient, (4) acting according to regulative principles, (5) abandoning the association of non-devotees and (6) following in the footsteps of the previous acharyas”.

We have imported to our minds the ideas of the material world through our sense organs which are like cameras snapping photos of the world through eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin. The worldly ideas of millions of births have occupied our minds. We have taken those ideas in our minds with adoration. Now, when we want them to go out from our minds, they will not go. For example, you cannot vacate a tenant if you allow him to occupy a portion of your house (for a very long time). Nobody wants to leave the place when once he is allowed to occupy it. We have embraced the material thoughts, now, when we want to concentrate our mind on our object of worship, those thoughts in our minds come up and disturb us. It is our fault or mistake that we have imbibed material thoughts in our minds. So, it is our duty now to remove those thoughts.

Mind is very restless. How to quiet it or control it? Lord Sri Krishna advises us to practise abhyasyoga and vairagya. Abhyasyoga means to try repeatedly. Vairagya has two implications— detachment to worldly non-eternal objects and attachment to eternal Entity Sri Krishna. We should not become disheartened under any circumstance and stop performing bhajan. Worldly thoughts, which are light, will be purged out to the extent we shall imbibe divine thoughts, which are heavy and sublime, to our minds.

We get some sort of temporary pleasure in fulfilling the demands of the senses. That delusion of sense-pleasure drags us forcibly to the sinful acts whose ultimate result is suffering. When we actually realise the harmful result of sense gratification, we shall refrain ourselves from doing so.

If we pour ghee (purified butter) into the fire, the fire will increase. In the like manner if we fulfil the desire of lust, the lust-fire will increase; it will not be extinguished. That is not the procedure for getting deliverance from our propensity to fulfil lustful desires. If we can pour a huge quantity of ghee at a time onto the fire, the fire will be extinguished. In the like manner if we have craving for the Absolute Whole Sri Krishna, that craving will extinguish the fire

of worldly desires, sense-gratification desires.

## **Realizing our defects**

As long as we cannot give up our material egos, it will not be possible to eradicate mundane vanities and drawbacks. Misconception of self is the root cause of self-aggrandisement, deceitfulness and other drawbacks. It is not easy for an enslaved jīva to give up mundane egos, so naturally it is very difficult to remove those shortcomings. By constant company of bona fide sadhus and by steadfast practice of different forms of devotion with submission to real sadhus we can gradually remove our shortcomings. It will take time. It depends upon the intensity of sadhana. Nothing can be achieved all of a sudden. This is also true when we actually perform sadhana. We can realise our defects and drawbacks and we become humble. We become more and more humble when we come in contact more and more with Sri Krishna, Who is Absolute Good. This humbleness is not bad. When we come in touch with light, we can then realise that we were in darkness.

I am glad to learn that you are sincerely performing bhajan. When a person sincerely performs bhajan, he feels his drawbacks. Now when you are trying to perform bhajan for God-realisation you are facing so many hurdles on the way to reach the ultimate goal, so many drawbacks of which you had no feeling earlier. This is a long journey.

You have only started bhajan. Nothing can be achieved all of sudden. It will take time. It depends upon the tenacity of purpose and wholehearted sincere endeavor. We should not do anything emotionally.

The greatest impediment in nam-bhajan is vilification of genuine sadhus. We should remember the teachings of Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Those who are humbler than a blade of grass, more forbearing than a tree, giving due respect to all, but not desirous of getting respect from others, are eligible to perform Harinama sankirtan. We should censure ourselves. We should not take the risk of censuring others.

## Removing obstacles

Sri Narasimha Bhagavan removes our obstacles of bhajan. It will be good for you to remember Him daily. You are to pray for the Grace of Patitpavan Nityananda Prabhu, Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu and vaisnavas. They will show you the right path.

Remembrance of Sri Narasimhadeva is good for all. You should also remember Him. He will show you the right direction. We should always remember Narasimhadeva — morning, day time, evening and night. It is good that you are chanting the Holy Name regularly.

Bhagavan Balarama appeared in Kaliyuga as Nityananda, Who is gracious to all fallen souls. If you pray to Him with sincere heart, all doubts and obstacles in your bhajan will be removed.

## Shelter of a bona fide guru

We should know that conditioned souls due to their aversion to the Supreme Lord have been hurled down here in the prison house of the world. This world is not the place of real peace and bliss. The prison house is a place for the punishment of culprits. As we find that a diseased person cannot treat himself and has to go to an expert doctor for treatment, similarly, for the treatment of worldly disease - birth, death and threefold afflictions - bona fide expert spiritual doctors are necessary. You will find scriptural evidence for this in Srimad Bhagavatam (11.3.21):

*tasmad gurum prapadyeta jijnasuh sreya uttamam sabde pare ca nisnatam  
brahmany upasamasrayam*

“Therefore, after submitting to Sri Guru, the votary should ask for his eternal

welfare. The bona fide guru must have the qualities of being well-versed in the scriptures and should have realisation of the ultimate reality, the Supreme Lord”.

Mahadev said to Parvati Devi, 'There may be so many pseudo-gurus to snatch money from the disciples but they cannot remove sufferings by prescribing actual treatment. A real bona fide guru is very rare.' When you want quality you cannot get quantity. If you are to increase quantity you are to sacrifice quality.

## **Challenging mood**

Absolute bliss is the Supreme Person — Parabrahma. He is omnipotent and omniscient. There is nothing equal to Him or more than Him. Absolute Bliss can take the initiative. He is no unconscious cipher. We commit a Himalayan Blunder when we think that Absolute Bliss is subservient to us. Nobody in the universe can have contact with Him by a challenging mood. Those who make such attempts for the realisation of Absolute Bliss, by their finite intellectual and mental endeavour, will be totally frustrated and that transcendental, spiritual, blissful realm will remain ever-sealed for them. We cannot approach Him by the process of ascension. He will descend to a completely surrendered soul. It is categorically said in the Gita (7.15): The mischievous and demoniac persons will never submit to the Supreme Lord<sup>1</sup>. Just after that it is also said — ‘four kinds of persons who have got previous eternal spiritual good impressions will have the aptitude to worship Him’.

In respect to this, the evidence is referred to here in Srimad Bhagavatam (7.6.3), Prahlada's advice to the demon boys: “O demon boys! Embodied souls, owing to their connection with bodies, have produced passion of sense organs for corresponding sense-enjoyments. But such material enjoyments will come automatically, without endeavour, according to previous destiny. Nobody wants misery or pain, but, it comes automatically because of previous misdeeds. Hence, it is not proper or necessary to make efforts to get worldly pleasures because by such endeavour one's duration of life will be wasted. We will get eternal welfare by worshipping the Lotus Feet of the Supreme Lord Krishna. But we will never get such benefit by endeavouring for material pleasures.”

## Enhance good thoughts

Due to previous impressions of bad and good deeds of the aspirants, waves of the currents of bad and good thoughts will remain in their minds. A sincere votary will try to subdue evil thoughts and enhance good thoughts. By that the momentum of evil thoughts will be lessened and the momentum of good thoughts will be increased. As stated in the Gita (6.34-35) Arjuna asked Lord Krishna, 'O Lord! The mind is much too restless. The mind is more difficult to control than the wind.<sup>1</sup> Lord Krishna said, 'I agree to this, but you are very mighty. It is not impossible to subdue the mind. You can suppress it or control it by your endeavour in two ways: (1) abhyasa - you are to practise concentration of the mind on your object of worship repeatedly and (2) vairagya - practice detachment from material non-eternal things (the negative procedure of practice) and attachment to the Supreme Lord (the positive procedure of practice).

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**Question to Srila Gurudev-** *I am chanting each day and reading but inside everything feels dry and empty as if anything I do is evaporating into the air. I am urgently writing for your advice on how I can again find some taste and stop myself from walking away - as I am very close to the edge.*

## Practise to get stable state of mind

Prominent saints of India say that by association of bona fide sadhus for 15 minutes, or even for a moment, millions of offences will be removed and that it is like a boat to cross over the ocean of birth, death and the threefold affliction. One can get the association of a sadhu by one's previous accumulated impressions of eternal good deeds. So, it is undoubtedly true that the person who



gets the company of sadhus is most fortunate.

The root cause of our being imprisoned in the prison house of worldly bondage is our aversion to the Supreme Lord. After forgetting the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna and being enveloped by the illusory energy, we have passed through eight million births - as aquatic animals, trees, worms, birds and beasts - and after that we got this precious human birth. God has bestowed discriminating power between the eternal and non-eternal to human beings, so that they are capable of accepting Eternal Truth by giving up non-eternal things. This human birth is not meant for eating, sleeping, defending and mating like beasts and birds. Human beings can worship Krishna (God). But any moment we may lose this chance.

We have imbibed bad and good thoughts in our minds by passing through so many births. So it will take time to remove the bad thoughts and enhance devotional, eternal, good thoughts. The Supreme Lord Sri Krishna has advised in the Gita that through 'abhyasa yoga' — spiritual practice of subduing the evil thoughts and enhancing good eternal thoughts — by sincerely practising, gradually we will be able to get a stable state of mind.

Sri Krishna has emphatically said in the Gita— 'A sincere soul will never be deceived'. God is residing in our hearts, seeing everything. Nobody can do anything without His knowledge. We are reaping the fruits of our own actions. Nobody is to be blamed for our difficulties which are created by us by our own misdeeds. A sincere votary, who wants eternal welfare, should always see his own defects and good qualities in others. We can rectify ourselves if we see our own defects. It is due to our own actions that we have congenial and uncongenial environments. In this age, votaries are not capable of doing meditation, oblation and worship of Deities correctly. Chanting of death in this Kaliyuga.

The Supreme Lord Sri Krishna willing, I may leave for New Delhi from Calcutta with two other devotees. We will stay in our Math in Paharganj, New Delhi. I am glad to learn that you are also coming on the Vrajamandal parikrama celebration. Month long Vrajamandal parikrama (Circumambulation of Vraja dham) will start from 14th October.

May All-Merciful Sri Guru-Gauranga and Radha-Krishna bless you.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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**Question to Srila Gurudev** - (1) *My bhajan is not steady because my attachments to past material things still trouble my mind. What should I do!* (2) *How do I balance between my duties as a husband and a son and take devotees' association!*

## **Fight against unholy thoughts**

Received your letter in our Eastern zonal office, Guwahati, Assam and noted the contents.

The Supreme Lord Sri Krishna has emphatically said in the Gita that a sincere soul will never be deceived. The Supreme Lord is residing in the heart of every soul and knows everything. He is omniscient and omnipotent and he regulates the fruits of the actions of conditioned souls. There cannot be any mistake in His giving fruits. In the Gita it is said, "karmany evadhikaras te ra phalesu kadacana" - 'We can perform actions but we can have no hold over the fruits of the actions. Fruits are regulated by the Supreme Lord' (Bhagavad Gita. 2:47).

Conditioned souls have currents of thoughts in their minds imbibed from previous impressions of millions of births, both, holy thoughts and unholy thoughts. This human birth is given by the Lord to fight against unholy thoughts and to enhance holy thoughts. After passing through 80 lakhs (8 million) births of different species, we have got this human birth. God was satisfied by creating human beings as human beings have the capacity to discriminate between eternal and non-eternal and can worship the Supreme Lord, who is All-existence, All-knowledge and All-bliss. This human birth is not meant for eating, sleeping, defending and mating like birds and beasts. In Srimad Bhagavatam, 9th Canto, Veda Vyasa Muni has said that even Ambarisa Maharaj, who was a most dear

devotee of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna, could only remove all desires of this world gradually by performing bhajan without deceitfulness. A conditioned soul cannot get the desired result all of a sudden. If he is sincere in his efforts, by the grace of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna and His devotees, he will be ultimately successful. Actually we reap the fruits of our own actions. It is out of ignorance that we blame others for our own drawbacks. I hope as you are sincere you will be helped by the Supreme Lord and His devotees.

## **Take the help of devotees**

Unless the root cause of committing sin is eradicated, the aptitude to commit sin cannot be removed. The cause of sin is desire for committing sin, the cause of desire for committing sin is misconception of self, the cause of misconception of self is nescience (ignorance) and the cause of nescience is aversion to the Supreme Lord, who is All- Existence, All-Knowledge and All-Bliss. Therefore, the root cause of sin is aversion to Sri Krishna. So Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has said, “The conditioned souls of the world, due to forgetfulness of their relationship with the Supreme Lord, are averse to Sri Krishna since time immemorial.” Therefore, it is advised to cultivate devotional practices, principally to chant the Holy Name for remembrance of Sri Krishna. We have forgotten Sri Krishna from time immemorial. We should undo it and for this we need to take the help of bona fide suddha bhaktas. 'sadhana vinu sadhya-vastu heha nahi paya' - without devotional practice nobody can get the objective.

You should take advantage of sadhu sanga as much as practically possible. Also, you should not blame others for your own circumstances. As per the fruits of our own previous karma we have got such circumstances but you should not stop devotion to the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna under any circumstances. You should continually engage your energy to worship Sri Krishna and not for your relatives. As and when you get an opportunity for sadhu sanga you take advantage of it. Just as when we go to a doctor and take a potent injection, the effect of the injection remains for a long period. Similarly, when we take the injection of sadhu sanga, the effect remains for some period, say, 3-4 months. Many householder devotees who are not able to get much sadhu sanga, come for Navadwlp dham parikrama and the effect of this injection remains for the rest of

the year and then again.

As I am awfully busy I have written a few lines to you after getting some spare time.

My love to you. May All-Merciful Supreme Lord Sri Absolute Counterpart, Gurudev, bless you.

Affectionately yours, B. B. Tirtha

## **Real quality of a sadhu**

In regard to the birthday of your son, I pray to Sri Guru Gauratiga and Radha-Krishna to bless him.

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu preached bhagavat dharma suddha bhakti dharma and taught the same by practising. Kapil Bhagavan in Srimad Bhagavatam, 3rd Canto, clearly pointed out that the real quality of a sadhu is exclusive one-pointed devotion to the Supreme Lord. Without this no one can become a real sadhu. Meera Bai has also substantiated this.

The last message of Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur to His disciples before his disappearance in Baghbazar Gaudlya Math, Calcutta was 'With the sole purpose of worshipping Sri Hari we should pull on our life somehow in this most non- eternal world. We should not give up Hari bhajan in spite of hundreds of calamities, hundreds of obstacles, hundreds of reproaches and harassments. Don't be disheartened to serve Sri Krishna, without deceitfulness, although seeing the majority of the worldly people are not accepting it. Don't give up your worship of Sri Krishna and your spiritual devotional wealth listening and chanting Krishna-katha under any circumstances. Always do Hari-kirtan with the two qualities of being humbler than a blade of grass and more tolerant than a tree. We shall be able to realise Transcendental Delightfulness of service of Sri Krishna when we shall be entitled to do 'aprakrita harinam', remaining aloof from all attractions and

repulsions of this world. All arrangements of this world are extremely momentary. Never should we have indifference to or dislike for Sri Krishna sankirtan yajna, which will bestow on us all attainments.'

Suddha Krishna bhakti in this world is most scarce as stated in the scriptures. Amongst crores of emancipated souls we will find one Krishna bhakta. You have already heard - if we want quality, we cannot get quantity.

My love to you all.

Affectionately yours,

B. B. Tirtha

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## **Keep your body fit for performing bhajan**

After returning to Calcutta and carefully taking proper diet, I am feeling better. I am taking care of my health as far as practicable. It is not good always to think about the body which will perish one day. Mind is the cause of bondage as well as emancipation.

I am worried that your father is indisposed and has got heart trouble. Mental and physical rest is the best medicine for heart disease. He should not have any tension in his mind. Diet control and light physical exercise is necessary for controlling blood sugar. He should follow doctor's advice strictly. Ayurvedic medicine is good for heart disease. Your father should not give up allopathic medicines as he is accustomed to them but he should simultaneously take Ayurvedic medicines with a gap of 2 to 3 hours, as per doctor's advice.

We are in bondage when our mind is attached to non-eternal things and we get emancipation when our mind is attached to Eternal Reality, Sri Krishna, Who is All-Existence, All-Knowledge and All-Bliss. This precious human birth is only

meant for Hari bhajan and not for anything else. Any moment we may lose this chance. It will not be wise to give more importance to the necessities of the apparent self instead of the real self. As we are not emancipated souls, as long as we are in bondage we cannot become totally indifferent to the necessities of body. Physical troubles will cause mental reactions. Hence, you are to keep your body fit for performing bhajan uninterruptedly. It is necessary that you should follow doctor's advice.

## PART 3 Harinām and Dīkṣā

The essence of knowledge is - 'Life is impermanent and full of adversities. Therefore, take absolute shelter of Śrī Harināma and do your relative duties. Cool down the burning sensation of the threefold afflictions by drinking the ambrosia of Harināma. There is nothing valuable except Śrī Harināma in these fourteen worlds.'

**Question to Srila Gurudev** - *Is diksa only a formality? How one name of Krishna equals three names of Ram?*

### Bona fide Guru

A sadguru (bona fide guru) is rarely to be found in this world (remember Mahadeva's instruction to Parvati Devi— 'guravo bahavah...'). The criterion for recognising a sadguru is the presence of two special qualities - being well-versed in authentic scriptural knowledge and being well-established in the service of the God. The Upanishad, the Gita and Bhagavatam mention these in the verses 'srotriyam brahma- nistham...'; 'jnaninah tattva-darsinah..and pare ca respectively.

One meaning of srotriya is 'being well-versed in the Vedas and other allied scriptures', another meaning is 'receiving mantra through a preceptorial channel'; jnaninah means scriptural knowledge; sabde nisnatam refers to authentic scriptural knowledge. A bona fide guru must also have complete fixation of mind to Absolute Parabrahma, and realisation of the Supreme Divinity, to be well-established in the service of the God.

For instance, Prahlad Maharaj gave proper respect to his family gurus, Sanda and Amarka, who had preceptorial knowledge and were well-versed in the Vedas but they had no realisation of Parabrahma Vishnu. When Hiranyakasipu, father of Prahlad, asked Prahlad about 'sadhu' and 'essence of the teachings of guru', Prahlad did not give the answer as per the desire of his father or his family gurus, but he stated the teachings of Narada Goswami, from whom he got Vishnu-bhakti while he was in his mother's womb. He accepted Narada Goswami as actual guru.

So-called family gurus, claiming to have received mantra through the right preceptorial channel, cannot achieve their own eternal benefit and have no capacity to bestow eternal benefit to others. Practical life- realisation is essential for being a sadguru.

After the disappearance of Sriman Mahaprabhu and His personal associates, the Sad- Goswamis, Sri Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami, Sri Viswanath Chakraborty, Narottam Thakur etc., darkness descended on the horizon of bhakti. Nobody

could understand what suddha bhakti actually is. Many pseudo sects cropped up - not only thirteen pseudo sects as described by Totaram Das Babaji Maharaj but numerous others. The number of such pseudo sects went on increasing and even now will go on increasing because conditioned souls cannot understand the implication of the instructions of the Supreme Lord by their own endeavour. Therefore, the Supreme Lord sent His own personal associates, Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur and Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur, to rescue the fallen souls.

## **Diksa is not a formality**

It seems, according to the alternative meanings of 'formality' in the Oxford Dictionary, you have meant that diksa has no importance or meaning, it is only a ritualistic form. But to have a clear conception of the diksa you are to go through 'Rupa siksa' stated in Chaitanya Charitamrita. There it is written that, after moving through different species in the universe, a fortunate living being gets a human birth, and even in human birth, due to accumulation of the good



impressions of eternal good deeds of previous lives, comes in contact with guru and By

the grace of Bhagavan he comes in contact with a bona fide guru and by the grace of a bona fide guru he gets the service of Bhagavan. It is a long topic, you can go through it from Chaitanya Charitamrita, Madhya Lila, Chapter : 19. There it is clearly written - you should get the seed of bhakti from a bona fide guru. The seed should have life in it otherwise you cannot get the desired fruit. As for example, if a lifeless seed is sown on a cultivated land, you cannot get any fruit out of it. Sadguru is necessary to get a seed of bhakti having life in it. It is not non-important. It is not merely a formality.

## **One of Krishna's names equals three of Rama's name**

The Supreme Lord is One. Rama, Nrsimha, etc. are His different manifestations as per different pastimes. The comparison given here that one Krishna name equals three Rama names is in the sense of the benefit that can be attained by chanting them, i.e., the benefit that is attained by chanting one Krishna name is three times the benefit that is attained by chanting the name of Rama (Lord Ramachandra, not Rama as in Mahamantra, which signifies Krishna only —'Radhikaramana Rama'). This comparison of benefit is in the sense that all delightful love relationships are there with Krishna or in braja-prem, whereas with Lord Ramachandra only three and a half rasas (delightful love relations) are there. By chanting the name of Krishna you will get more attachment to the Supreme Lord, which is the ultimate goal. Highest attachment will be in gopi-prem.

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**Question to Srila Gurudev** - I have the following questions (1) Many times it occurs within our sampradaya that a name is given at initiation that is not directly related to Krishna, but to Rama. Of course we know that Rama in tattva is non-different from Krishna, but in rasa there is difference. So my question is

then why are sometimes names given that reminds one of Lord Rama? Or do all these names of Rama Ilia have their corresponding Personalities in Krishna lila? Urmila refers to the wife of Lakshman. Is there a corresponding personality in Krishna lila?

(2) At the time of initiation the guru places the bhakti-lata-bija in the heart of the disciple through imparting the mantra. Now say that at the end of the life the disciple is not fully realised, and still has some upadhis, so he has to come back. Then in the next life, is that bhakti-lata-bija still present in his heart? Or does he need to get a new bhakti-lata-bija from another guru?

(3) Does a guru who is not fully realised yet (who is madyam adhikari) have the power to impart the bhakti-lata-bija?

## **Ontologically same manifestations**

(1) The Supreme Lord is Absolute or Infinite. Nothing can be outside the Supreme Lord. Everything is within Him and under Him. Even a particle of dust cannot be outside the Infinite. If it is accepted that a particle of dust can remain outside the Absolute, Absolute will lose His position. There cannot be many Supreme Lords. Sanatan dharma or vaisnava dharma never says that the Supreme Lord can be many. We should remember the teachings of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu at Ranganath dham to Venkatbhatta and his family members who were devout worshippers of Lakshmi-Narayana. After coming in contact with Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and by His grace they became worshippers of Radha-Krishna. In that context, it has been said in Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita, Madhya Lila, 9.117, “siddhantatas tv abhede 'pi srisa-krsna-svariipayoh, rasenotkrasyate krsna- rupa esa rasa-sthitih”— "There is no difference in Lakshmi-pati-Narayana and Radha- pati-Krishna, but in lila-rasa, all kinds of sweet divine love due to all kinds of delightful love-relationships are only manifested in Nandanandan Sri Krishna. In reality, ontologically they are the same. The difference is that in Krishna-lila there is enhancement in rasa. By worshipping Nandanandan Krishna we can get all kinds of rasas. In that sense, Nandanandan Krishna is avatari. But if any worshipper worships numerous different forms of the Supreme Lord, they are not worshipping different Supreme Lords. Evidence you will get from the

hymn 'Dasavatar' written by Sri Jayadeva Goswami, the greatest devotee of madhurya rasa. He has sung the glories of ten different Forms of God in this way —'kesava dhrta mina sarira jaya jagadisa hare, kurma jaya jagadisa hare...' He is singing the glories of Jagadish Krishna, Who has performed so many pastimes. Of course, it is true that if you get the taste of higher rasa in the worship of a higher Form of God (higher in regard to manifestation of rasa), you cannot have the desire to go to the Form of the Supreme Lord where that rasa is not manifested. The conditioned souls of this world, who have just started worship of God as novices, have no actual taste of sweetness of any Form of the Supreme Lord. Externally, even if one is given Krishna-mantra, if for any reason he comes in contact with Matsya- Bhagavan (Fish Form of the Supreme Lord) or Kurma Bhagavan (Tortoise Form of the Supreme Lord), he will be so much attracted that he would not be able to go to Sri Krishna, of Whom he has only heard but had no actual contact.

It is written in the Ramayana that the rsis of Dandakaranya forest, being very much attracted by the beautiful Form of Lord Ramachandra, wanted to serve Him in husband-wife relationship. Ramachandra said, in that pastime, (Maryada Purushottam), giving dignity to ethical principles, that only Sita Devi is entitled to get Him as husband and no one else. They could get Him as husband by attaining birth in a gopi family and by taking shelter of the gopis, when He would appear as Krishna in Vraja- dham. By the grace of Ramachandra, those rsis were born in gopi families and got Krishna with husband-wife relationship, even more than that— relationship, gopi-madhurya relationship.

Without the grace of Baladeva, nobody can get Krishna. Lakshman in Rama-lila is non- different from Balarama in Krishna-lila. Lakshman, being the younger brother of Rama, had to obey the orders of Ramachandra as elder brother and could not serve Rama as per His desire. He wanted to become the elder brother of Rama and His desire was fulfilled in Krishna-lila when He appeared as Balarama. Krishna had to obey the orders of His elder brother Balarama. Revati is the internal potency of Balarama. Urmila, non- different from Revati, is the complete internal potency of Lakshman Bhagavan. As the rsis of Dandakaranya could get Krishna by the grace of Ramachandra, similarly by the grace of Lakshman, Who is identical with Balarama, we can get the service of Sri Krishna. Urmila is non-different from Lakshman. She is His grace incarnate form. She can give everything, if She desires, but there should be sincerity in the submission of the desire.

## The ultimate mantra

(2) One should go through the Brihad-Bhagavatamrita. As Krishna-mantra is the ultimate mantra, if mantra-japa is not stopped, it will take the worshipper ultimately to Sri Krishna, passing through many attractive realms, even transcendental realms. Also, Bhagavad-Gita, 6.41 —

*prapya punya-krtam lokan usitva sasvatih samah sucinam srimatam gehe yoga-bhrasto 'bhijayate*

'The unsuccessful yogi, after many, many years of enjoyment on the planets of the pious living entities, is born into a family of righteous people, or into a family of rich aristocracy.'

(3) The sadguru or bona fide sadhu is very rare in this world. Mahadeva said to Parvati, '*guravo bahavah sand sisya-vittapaharaka durlabha sadguru devi sisya-santapaharakah*' - 'There are so many so called gurus who squeeze out money from disciples, but one who can allay the miseries of the disciples is rare to be found. If you want quality, you are to sacrifice quantity and if you want to increase quantity, you are to sacrifice quality'.

I am also sending the article 'Vaishnav Aparadh' to you, as much as we have written. In that also, in the first page, there is reference to your third question of madhyam- adhikaris.

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**Question to Srila Gurudev** - *Some miscreants had broken my car window and had stolen a number of articles including my japamala given to me by my Guru Maharaj at the time of my initiation, 30 years ago. I am devastated by the loss of my japamala. Even though I am undeserving of any mercy, I would like to ask if it would be possible for you to give me a new japamala that has been chanted on*

*by you. If that were possible, would it also be possible to send them to me by post as it will be some time before I might get to India. I am very perturbed and am hopeful of some solution. I am missing you very, very much.*

## **Guru-disciple relationship is eternal**

Received your letter dated \_\_\_\_\_ and I am shocked to learn that you lost your japamala, which you got 30 years before from your Most Revered Gurudev, His Divine Grace Parampujyapad Srlmad Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj. ISKCON temple is outside of city area and it is in a bit of a secluded place. You are to be very careful in going to such places outside the city. It is my suggestion to you that you should submit your prayer to the ISKCON temple authority to make arrangements for getting japamala by searching in the nearby area. By thorough search it may be possible to get the japamala. I do not know whether you have already done it. In many cases, I found that by searching, devotees got back their japamala. Generally, we used to advise devotees in India, who lost their japamalas, to try to get such japamala from the ascetic or household godbrothers or godsisters who have left the body. I think there may be such godbrothers of yours in London. You can try this.

His Divine Grace Parampujyapad Srimad Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj is my Revered siksa guru, one of the dearest disciples of our Most Revered Param-gurupadpadma His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur. You know that he preached the message of Divine Love of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu throughout the world, being directed by his Most Revered Gurudev. You are fortunate that you have got harinam from him. A sincere disciple should see his gurudev as the Grace Incarnate Form of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna. You should know that the relationship between the bona fide guru and the bona fide disciple is eternal. There cannot be any severance of such eternal spiritual relationship. Although you are not seeing him physically by your material eyes, the Absolute Counterpart of the Supreme Lord - Gurudev - is as eternal as the Supreme Lord. Gurudev is the Grace Incarnate Form of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna. His grace is upon you, always. Your japamala can be taken away, but his compassion on you, nobody can take away. So what is the reason of your being so much perturbed. You submit your prayer to your Gurudev wholeheartedly and worship your Gurudev, which every disciple should do, always. The worshipper should first worship guru and after that, taking his

permission, one can worship Gauranga and Radha-Krishna. All-Merciful Gurudev already graced you. You can keep one Tulasi mala in the hand of the Deity of your Gurudev and take it from him and do harinam. The Supreme Lord and His personal associates do not give importance to words but they see the heart of the worshipper. You can worship your Gurudev for one week and accepting the mala from His sacred hands, perform japam on it; one lakh beads everyday for one week. As you personally got the grace of your gurudev, there is no reason for you being worried for the loss of the japamala. In spite of that, whenever you will come to India I shall speak to you and try to satisfy you in whatever way you want me to do.

I am somehow pulling on. My present health condition is not so good. Friends are advising me for proper check-up by heart specialist. We shall be happy if we submit to the will of Supreme Lord, Who is All-Good.

My love to you. May All-Merciful Sri Sri Guru-Gauranga and Radha-Krishna bless you.

Affectionately yours, Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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## **Losing japamala & mantra paper**

He expressed his grief in his letter to me for losing his japamala in the train. Japamala should not be kept hanging or in the pocket, especially lower pocket, it should be kept around the neck, particularly during a journey or outside tour-programmes. He should be very careful regarding this in future.

You have lost your mantra paper. It is not good to miss mantra paper. It should be kept very carefully. It should not be seen by anybody. You are to search further to get it. General rule is — mantra is to be heard and not given through writing. As we cannot stay at a place for long and cannot spare time and as mantra japam should be correct, this paper is given. But when you think that you have remembered the mantra correctly, you are to put the mantra paper in the

river Ganges or Yamuna to flow away so that nobody can get it. The mantra paper cannot be sent by post. I shall give it to you personally.

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## **Desire for initiation**

I was in receipt of your letters sent by Air Mail to the Calcutta Math address. Recently, I also got your short letter. I have gone through the contents of your three letters. In spite of my desire to write to you, I could not do it, as you have not given any address or e-mail. I have got your e-mail address now in your letter.

You have expressed in your letter your desire for getting further initiation. I do not know whether you will be able to come to India to take such initiation and I do not know when I shall be able to do this service. As far as I remember, you had such a programme in 2002, but it could not be materialised. Everything depends upon the will of the Supreme Lord. I learned from your letter that you had first come in contact with Parampujyapad Srimad Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj, our Most Revered Siksa Guru, in 1976, due to eternal impressions of your previous good deeds, and got the aptitude to worship the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna.

This human birth is only meant for worship of the Supreme Lord and for nothing else. God has given the discriminating power to human beings to understand what is good and what is bad, what is eternal and what is non-eternal. This human birth is not meant for eating, sleeping, defending and mating like beasts and birds. After passing through 80 lakhs of births, you have got this valuable human birth to get deliverance from the shackles of Maya and to get the highest objective — Krishna- prema. It will be foolish to spend a moment of this valuable human birth for non-eternal benefits of the world. All physical relations in this world are apparent and unreal.

Whether the conditioned soul understands or not, his eternal relationship is with the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna. As the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna appeared in this blessed Kaliyuga as Gauranga Mahaprabhu, the most munificent form of Godhead, and Baladeva Prabhu appeared as Nityananda Prabhu, furthestmost munificent form of Godhead, a blessed votary should take absolute shelter of Their Lotus Feet, and call Them by uttering Their Names from the core of his heart. This way all obstacles will be removed in no time. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu gave His standing order to all conditioned souls in this world that they should do Sri Krishna sankirtan, i.e., Hare Krishna mahamantra, without tenfold offences. If you do this, it will be your greatest service to the Supreme Lord. You will get more benefit if you do Harinam before Tulasi. It is better if you can also utter four Nrsimha pranam mantras while going to bed and after rising from the bed.

Hope this will find you all in good health and spirit. May All-Merciful Sri Guru-Gauranga Nityananda Prabhu bless you all.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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## **Essence of knowledge**

Sri Bhaktivinode Thakur says - "The essence of knowledge is 'Life is impermanent and full of adversities. Therefore, take absolute shelter of Sri Harinama and do your relative duties. Cool the hotness of the burning sensation of the threefold afflictions by drinking the ambrosia of Harinama. There is nothing valuable except Sri Harinama in these fourteen worlds.'

Chanting of the Holy Name, avoiding the tenfold offences in the company of bhaktas (pure devotees), is the only way to get emancipation from the miseries of the world and to get Absolute Bliss. Uncongenial company of worldly people,



who are averse to Sri Krishna, is to be avoided for getting devotional progress and eternal welfare."

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## **Aspiring devotees and service of the Holy Name**

The Holy Name should emerge from the core of the heart of the votary. By the company of a bona fide pure devotee, causeless devotion to God will be revealed in the heart of the votary, i.e. causeless devotion will be manifested in the soul of the votary. No bhakti can be done when retaining any misconceptions of self.

*asadhu-sange bhai krsna-nama nahi haya*

*namaksara bahiraya bate tabu nama kabhu naya [1]*

*kabhu namabhasa haya, sada nama-aparadha*

*e saba janibe bhai krsna-bhaktira badha [2]*

*yadi karibe krsna-nama sadhu-sanga kara*

*bhukti-mukti-siddhi-vanchha dure parihara [3]*

*"dasa-aparadha" tyaja mana apamana*

*anasaktye visaya bhunja ara laha krsna-nama [4]*

*krsna-bhaktira anukula saba karaha svikara*

*krsna-bhaktira pratikula saba kara parihara [5]*

The association of bona fide sadhus is essential for doing any kind of bhakti.

*na tatha hy aghavan rajan tapa-adibhih*

*yatha krsnarpita-pranas tat-purusa-nisevaya*

(Srimad Bhagavatam 6.1.16)

Sukadev Goswami said to Pariksit Maharaja, 'O king! A vicious person cannot be so much sanctified by expiation of karma or jnana as much as he will be so by taking unconditional submission to Sri Krishna. How does one get that unconditional submission? Only by the service of a pure devotee, a bona fide surrendered soul.'

*sarvopādhi-vinirmuktaṁ tat-paratvena nirmalam hṛṣīkeṇa hṛṣīkeśa- sevanam bhaktir ucyate.*

(Narada-pancaratra/CC. Madhya Lila 19.170) — 'All misconceptions of self or

material egos, gross and subtle, should be completely effaced from the heart. After that one should have the knowledge that he is of Krishna (of bhagavan). In this way when one will become holy, after that whatever he will do by his sense organs for the service of Hrsikesa, the Supreme Lord, will be bhakti'.

In this context we should remember the teachings of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Sri Siksastaka, 4th verse:

*na dhanam na janarh na sundarim va jagadisa kamaye,*

*mama janmani janmanisvare bhavatad bhaktir ahaituki tvayi*

'O almighty Lord, I have no desire to accumulate wealth, nor do I desire to enjoy beautiful women, nor do I want any number of followers. I only want Your causeless devotional service in my life birth after birth.'

*atah sri-krsna-namadi na bhaved grahyam indriyaih sevonmukhe hi jihvadau svayam eva sphuraty adah*

(Sri Bhakti-Rasamrta-Sindhu)

*nikhila-sruti-mauli-ratna-mala- dyuti-nirajita-pada-pankajanta ayi mukta-kulair upasyamanarh paritas tvarh hari-nama sarinsrayami*

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**Question to Srila Gurudev** ~ *Even though we are chanting, worshipping and taking prasad for a long time, still the heart is not changing. What one has to do to change the heart?*

## **We do not want Krishna from the heart**

For this, one has to have the company of a suddha-bhakta. Outwardly we are uttering the name 'Hare Krishna' 'Hare Krishna' 'Hare Krishna' but inwardly we have got misconception of the self, "I am this body", and bodily interests predominate in our heart. We are chanting the Name and thinking, "Oh Lord, I am in difficulty. I require another 50,000 dollars. Please save me. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna".

God sees my heart. According to my heart's desire He will fulfil my desires. I do not want Krishna from the heart but I am trying to remove my worldly problems. If anybody wants Krishna immediately he will get Him. But we can't sincerely utter as we are habituated in desiring worldly things, "I do not want to leave this Honolulu. Where we will be taken we do not know". And if Krishna comes and says, "Come with me! I will take you to Vrindavan! It appears as a hot place but actually it is a very good place!" If we will leave this place and go there we will be in great difficulty. We will have to beg alms. That is why we won't be able to go with Krishna to Vrindavan. You are uttering the name of Krishna and when Krishna comes and says, "I have come. Now, come along!"

"No, No. I have got these nice hog family responsibilities"

When Indra was cursed by his Gurudev, he came to this world and became a hog. Lord Brahma came to know about this when all the demigods told Lord Brahma, "There is no government, no monarch on the throne in heaven, the chair is vacant." "He is gone; he has gone to the Earth. He was cursed. He has taken the form of a hog." So, Lord Brahma went there to that place where Indra was a

hog and he told him: "Oh my dear Sir, you are not a hog, you are a king, emperor of Heaven. Come along." Then Indra [as hog] said: "Who are you? Why, I have got this nice hog society, beautiful wife, many children and I do not want to go. Who are you?"

This is forgetfulness. In a like manner Krishna says to us: *anityam asukham lokam imam prapya bhajasva mam* 'O living beings of this world! You have forgotten me, so you have come to this miserable and perishable world. Worship me and you will be rescued.' (Bhagavad Gita 9.33)

*sarva-dharman parityajya mam ekam saranam vraja* - 'Give up all of your relative duties. Take Absolute Shelter of me. I shall rescue you from all sins.' (Bhagavad-Gita 18.66)

But we say: "Who are you? I have got this nice society and many responsibilities, many obligations - many. I have got wife, children, etc. - Who are you? I don't believe you. I won't go with you. I won't leave, I won't leave. I won't leave this Honolulu."

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**Question to Srila Gurudev** - *I keep losing my concentration while chanting. It is very difficult to focus.*

## **Chant loudly**

For that reason Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu taught us through Haridas Thakur. If we perform japa (alone) we will have mental diversion. But, if we perform chanting in the holy company of suddha-bhaktas, if we chant loudly, and we hear only Krishna, Krishna, Krishna then no sound of this world can enter. That is why we will have concentration if we are always hearing Radha Krishna, Radha Krishna, Radha Krishna. For us loud chanting is more effective.

*sei du'ti katha, bhula' na sarvatha uccai svare kara 'hari nama-rava 'phalgu' ara*

*'yukta", 'baddha ara 'mukta' kabhu na bhaviha, ekakara saba*

(Vaisnava Ke? by Srila Prabhupad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur)

Our Paramgurudev's advice is that we should loudly chant the Holy Name (uccai svare). To not loudly chant Krishna, is not yukta-vairagya; that is phalgu-vairagya or false renunciation. There is one river in Gaya, India. Externally we see only sand but below the sand there is an undercurrent water. It is a phalgu River - the False River.

If you do not loudly chant the Holy Name, the Holy Name's grace will not come to you. His grace will not come to you, His remembrance will not come to you. So, your enjoying spirit, your ulterior motives will not be removed; they will still remain. You may be showing yourself as a renouncer but inwardly wildly thinking about the objects of sensual enjoyment. This is phalgu-vairagya – pseudo vairagya, false renunciation.

In actual vairagya we shall devote our mind towards Sri Krishna. How? If we loudly chant, it will be good for us and also for all other living beings of this world (because the Name and the Named are the same). If you loudly chant you will have concentration. Other living beings will also be able to hear - Krishna, Krishna, Krishna. They also have forgotten Krishna and for that reason they have come to this world. When you chant loudly they may remember; they may not be able to chant but they can hear.

However, here in this place (Hawaii) we are told, "No permission! No noise to be made! Therefore loud chanting is not allowed." When I was in San Francisco, Ramdas Prabhu said: 'You can perform sankirtan at my temple there (Hawaii) but not here (San Francisco). If you do it, the neighbours will complain, 'Do not do so loudly.' I have come to this place (Hawaii). This is also such a place where if you do kirtan loudly, the neighbors will complain to the police and they will come and ask, "What are you doing? What is this?"

But in India there are many mosquitoes in every hall but you can do harinam sankirtan (spiritual devotional performance in association with devotees) wherever you like. In a holy place, when we perform bhajan, everybody is inspired to do this.

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**Question to Srila Gurudev** - *I am not able to chant Harinam loudly as I have a problem in my vocal cords. How should I do japa? How many rounds of mala do I have to? How to increase chanting? What does it mean to chant continuously? How can I live by the third sloka of Siksastaka? How to stop identifying myself with this body?*

## **Bhajan is not possible with material ego**

It is not that japa of Harinam can be done only by chanting loudly

*namaparadha-yuktanam namany eva haranty agham*

*avisranti-prayuktani tany evārtha- karani ca*

(Padma Purana)

Diksa mantra japa can be done only mentally but Harinam can be done mentally as well as loudly.

Material non-eternal sense organs have drawbacks, but there cannot be any defect in the spiritual sense organs of a tattvik guru who is established in the realised state. One who is established in the eternal nature of the real self can chant correctly. Enslaved jivas with material egos and material sense organs can never do any kind of bhajan. Whatever they do is only karma for material benefits. We find evidence from Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur-

*siddha-deha diya vrndavana majhe sevamṛta karo dana, piyaiya prema matta kari more suno nija gana*

Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur has submitted His prayer to the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna to bestow the ambrosia of loving service to Him by giving realised spiritual form. The Supreme Lord actually, by imparting prema to His associate, sings His own glories through the devotee and also hears His own glories. With material ego and material endeavour, actually, you cannot do any kind of service

to the Supreme Lord. Also, Srila Rupa Goswami has written in Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu (1.2.234):

*atah sri-krsna-namadi na bhaved grahyam indriyaih sevonmukhe hi jihvadau svayam eva sphuraty adah*

“The Name of the Supreme Lord is not material sound. In this material realm, a sound denotes a thing; sound itself is not the thing. As for example, the word 'water' denotes the thing 'water'. Just uttering 'water' you cannot quench your thirst. You have to drink water. So in this material world, material sound and the thing indicated by material sound are different but in the Transcendental Spiritual Realm, the Transcendental Name of the Supreme Lord and the Transcendental Entity of the Supreme Lord are non-different. The Supreme Lord is the cause of all causes, and therefore, naturally, is Self-effulgent. His Transcendental Name is also Self-effulgent”.

The Transcendental Name descends to a completely surrendered soul. The Supreme Lord descends in the sanctified heart of a bona fide surrendered soul. The Transcendental Name and Form descends to the tongue etc. of surrendered devotees inclined to serve Sri Krishna. It is never possible to have contact with the Transcendental Reality, the Supreme Lord, Who is All-Existence, All-Knowledge and All-Bliss, by the process of ascension. Only through the process of descension, the Transcendental Name, Form, Attributes and Pastimes of the Supreme Lord can be realised.

Conditioned souls have the aptitude to know things with their own endeavour. The only way to realise the Absolute Spirit is unconditional surrender to Him, or more correctly, to His Grace-Incarnate Form —suddha-bhakta or sad-guru.

Nirguna Bhagavan, Who is Absolute Reality, descends through a bona fide preceptorial channel. Hence, without submission to a bona fide preceptorial channel, the cultivation of mantra, of the Holy Name, will not be fruitful. As stated in the Padma Purana — ‘*sampradaya-vihlana ye mantras te nisphala matah*’. We should have clear understanding of the distinction of a material conditioned soul and a sincere blessed soul aspiring for eternal real welfare, suddha bhakti.

## Direct service of the Lord

Our previous acarya Srila Jagannatha Das Babaji Maharaj had two sevakas. The sevakas were aggrieved of getting an order from their gurudev (Srila Jagannatha Das Babaji Maharaj) to work in the vegetable garden, in spite of their praying to Him for giving them scope to go through Bhagavatam. Ultimately they submitted their problem to Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur - about their gurudev not giving them scope to read Bhagavatam and to do Harinam. Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur, after hearing them smiled and told them that their Gurudev is not an ordinary human being. Actually, He is a personal associate of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna. He is directly serving the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna. Out of compassion, he has given you the order to go to the vegetable garden to grow vegetables there, to make you fit to do Harinam. His garden is not an ordinary garden for the enjoyment of enslaved householders. If you accept the order of Gurudev and serve, that will be direct service to the Supreme Lord. By that, your sense organs will be engaged actually for the service of Sri Krishna and ultimately you will be able to utter the Name of Sri Krishna correctly. Moreover, while working in the garden you can also chant Harinam simultaneously”.

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**Question to Srila Gurudev** ~ *By the mercy of the Supreme Lord only, have I come in contact with you, when you mercifully travelled the world over. Your mercy has brought divine bliss to the fortunate souls and the world at large. For my own purification, to attract the grace of Gauranga, I am helping to organise a japa seminar, a retreat where devotees are going to gather to extensively perform japa during 2 weeks. We are so neophyte; we need the presence of experienced and advanced devotees to bless the whole performance. ‘Krishna Consciousness’ is not a theory, so please bless us by sending any senior devotee you will appoint. Anyone of those worshipping devotees, by his presence, will make the seminar a spiritual success.*

## Foreign tours



I have gone through your kind letter by e-mail. I know you have got affection for me.

When I was in \_\_\_\_\_, you helped me a great deal and made arrangements for our going from one place to another.

Initially, I had no desire to go outside India. But, when I was in North-India, devotees there insisted on my going. As our Most Revered Gurudev had disappeared, I approached our Most Revered Siksa Guru Parampujyapad Srimad B. P. Puri Goswami Maharaj, three years consistently. He encouraged me vigorously, by citing instances of the orders of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur and other gurutvarg, to go to foreign countries to spread the divine message of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. "For the conditioned souls of the world, wherever they may be, there is no other way to get deliverance from the shackles of Maya and to get the highest objective 'Krishna-prema', except Harinam sankirtan. Whether they accept or not this should be intimated to all." I then submitted my prayer to Most Revered Puri Goswami Maharaj, if he would take the responsibility so that I might not have a spiritual fall. He said that my Gurudev would take the responsibility.

Our Most Revered Gurudev directed me that I should not speak with the spirit of delivering a speech but should try to repeat whatever I heard from Gurudev, other gurutvarg and from authentic scriptures for my own spiritual benefit. As I could not rescue myself how can I rescue others?

After continuous preaching for four years or so, I got blockage of the heart as diagnosed by heart-specialist doctors who advised me to restrict my preaching programmes and also to speak less. Afterwards, as per my request, one doctor said that in the summer season I can go to Europe or America but should remain in one place. Some friends advised me not to undertake long distance air flights. Our attendant friends are always preventing me from going outside. Many are advising me to confine myself only to writing. So, it seems the Supreme Lord now does not want that I should go outside. Nothing can be done without the approval of the Supreme Lord. Although I am not fit for taking the strain of a tour programme, still sometimes, for giving Harinam and diksa I have been permitted to go short distances within India.

## **Perform japa for His satisfaction**

It is good to perform harinam japa (silently in the mind). But Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Srimad Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur, our Gurudev and guruvarg gave more stress for doing sankirtan because performers of sankirtan will have concentration on the object of worship due to the loud utterance of the Holy Name and others will also hear it. All forms of devotion are to be performed with the knowledge that we are of Krishna. We should take complete shelter of Sri Krishna and do nama sankirtan only for His satisfaction, and not for any other ulterior desires.

I have discussed the matter and it is proposed that Tridandi Swami Srimad B. S. Niskincana Maharaj, Math-in-charge of Chandigarh Math and Jt. Secretary of our institution, who also speaks English, should go with the party of Sri Ananta Ram Brahmachari and Bhutabhavan Das (Bhupendra). I think Srimad B. S. Niskincana Maharaj will require a sponsorship letter from you. You should contact him, as well as Swarup Damodar of New Delhi, for his passport and visa.

I am so so. My dandavat pranams to you and also to Prabhu. My love to others.

May All-Merciful Sri Guru-Gauranga and Radha-Krishna bless you all.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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## **Divine knowledge descends**

Humble representation to affectionate mother for her intense eagerness to serve Krishna and vaisnavas as per direction of her Most Revered Gurudev.

Hope this will find you all in good health and spirit. I am much impressed having gone through your long letter of seven pages. As you are the mother of Sri \_\_\_\_\_, automatically you have become like a mother to me also. Over and above this, as you are a disciple of my Most Revered Siksa Guru, Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj, you have got spiritual relation with me as cousin god-sister. Sincerely taking shelter of a bona fide guru is the highest spiritual devotional qualification. Transcendental Divine Knowledge descends through a bona fide preceptorial channel. No conditioned soul, by his own effort, can have contact with the Transcendental Supreme Lord Sri Krishna, Who is All-Existence, All-Knowledge and All-Bliss. Aversion to Sri Krishna is the root cause of the envelopment of the conditioned souls by nescience - deep dark ignorance - and thereby conditioned souls become victim of the threefold afflictions in the prison house of the world.

I shall request you to go through the enlightenment of your Revered Gurudev in His pithy explanation of one verse of Gita - 'When one is enlightened with the knowledge by which ignorance is destroyed, then his knowledge reveals everything as the Sun lights up everything at daytime.' Here knowledge is not intellectual knowledge but self-effulgent knowledge. Realisation of the God is extremely difficult as well as very easy. Without belief and submission to Him, nobody can have His actual realisation. If there will be total unconditional submission, immediately everything will be clear.

As I have got heart trouble, my movements have been restricted. Yet, Supreme Lord willing, I have got the desire to go to New Delhi on 6th October, 2005. I shall have scope then, occasionally to participate in the circumambulation ceremony of Vraja dham and other celebrations. It will start on 14th October and terminate on 13th November. We are so so.

Lastly, I pray for your blessings. My love to your son and others.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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**Question to Srila Gurudev** ~ *I am your (householder) disciple. Though sometimes I am able to give donation, I've not been able to render any other service to you. Is there any particular service that you can direct me to do?*

## **Greatest service**

Actually, you are not my disciple but you are the disciple of our Most Revered Gurudev, Who is the Absolute Counterpart of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna and His Grace Incarnate Form. Our Most Revered Gurudev used to say that a bona fide guru never thinks himself a guru when giving mantra to a disciple. A suddha bhakta always thinks of himself as a servitor of the Supreme Lord. The greatest devotion to the Supreme Lord is to persuade the conditioned souls, who have become victims of the threefold afflictions by being enveloped by the illusory energy of Supreme Lord, to divert their minds from worldly non-eternal things towards their relationships with the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna with Whom they have an eternal, real relationship. To engage one conditioned soul, by persuasion, to serve Sri Krishna is one of the greatest services to the Supreme Lord. A suddha bhakta does this duty for the satisfaction of Krishna but a third person sees that one is 'guru' giving mantra and another is 'disciple' receiving mantra.

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## **Krishna is easily satisfied**

It is not difficult to propitiate Sri Krishna. Prahlad Maharaj, to persuade demon boys to worship the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna said - '*na hy acyutam prinayato*

*bahv-ayaso suratmajah, atmatvat sarva-bhiitanam siddhatvad iha sarvatah'*-  
Bhagavatam 7.6.19 - 'It is not difficult to please Krishna as He is dear to all living beings and is residing in their hearts. As such there is no difficulty to search for Him. Don't think that as the Supreme Lord is Almighty and Infinite, little boys cannot worship Him. It may be difficult for a wife to please her husband or for a husband to please his wife; for parents to please the children or for children to please their parents in spite of their utmost efforts, but it is easy to satisfy Sri Krishna as He is dearest and nearest.'

Even if a small boy, having no worldly qualification and ability, submits his prayer to the Supreme Lord “O beloved Lord! I am an insignificant creature. I am unable to serve you. Please be gracious to me”, Krishna will be immediately satisfied. Wealth, erudition, social status etc. are not indispensable for the service of Sri Krishna. Only firm faith and sincerity of heart are necessary. The Most Munificent Form of Godhead, the Supreme Lord, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, has given a standing order to all conditioned souls in this world- 'Do japam of Maha-mantra, keeping the fixed number; you will get all kinds of attainments. Utter the Holy Name always without any binding of time, place, age or circumstance - even while eating, lying down and awakening. Day and night think about Krishna and chant His Name.

You have already heard - Ajamila got deliverance from worldly bondage just by uttering the Holy Name 'Narayana' out of fear, when he was on the verge of death, upon seeing the horrifying figures of the messengers of God of death.

My love to you all. May All-Merciful Supreme Lord Sri Krishna bless you.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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## **PART 4 Association of Sādhus**

I am happy and encouraged to see your initiative and aptitude to serve Viṣṇu and Vaiṣṇavas. The eternal nature of our real self is to serve Viṣṇu and Vaiṣṇavas. Those jīvas are blessed who have got the aptitude to serve Śrī Krishna and Krishna bhaktas.

### **Company of devotees**

The heart-specialist doctor advised me to remain in one place at least for 6 months. When I had a discussion with him regarding a preaching tour outside India, he had no objection if done after 3 months i.e. in the coming summer season. But I'm supposed to stay only at one place and devotees can come and see me. But will it be practically possible - if I go there and confine myself only to one place?

The company of bona fide devotees is necessary for devotional enhancement. You and your family are all devotionally inclined. If I can get your company, I shall also be happy. Actually we do not want the company of persons desirous of sensuous enjoyments nor of renouncers. We want the company of śuddha bhaktas only. They may be in a household life or in an ascetic life. It is said ,bhaktistu bhagavad bhakta sangena parijāyate'— bhakti can be attained only through the association of bona fide devotees. If the Supreme Lord desires, we can get the company of the devotees in Europe. Actually, when someone becomes eligible to get the company of a pure devotee, it is sure either the Supreme Lord will appear as a devotee before him or He will bring him to the company of devotees. As the sun is non-different from the rays of the sun, the Supreme Lord is also non-different from His Grace-incarnate Form, śuddha

bhakta. Therefore it is my submission to you that devotees should get together at any place at least once a week for Hari-katha. When there is lack of association of devotees one should go through the authentic scriptures or authentic writings of personal associates of Chaitanya Mahāprabhu—Śrīla Bhaktivinode Ṭhākura or Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Goswāmī Ṭhākura. This was the advice of our most revered Gurudev.

Hope by the grace of Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga and Rādhā-Krishna, you all are keeping well. My love to you all and also accept my daṇḍavat praṇāms.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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## **Congenial association**

Congenial association is a great factor in achieving enhancement in bhajan.

Uncongenial association diverts the minds of sādhanas. In exceptional cases, spiritually well-established persons can do bhajan under any circumstance anywhere and everywhere. In this Kaliyuga, congenial company is necessary for making progress in bhajan. Ṭhākura Bhaktivinode says, "I don't get strength in practising Harināma (sankīrtan) alone."

Collective bhajan is strength in Kaliyuga. But this collective bhajan should be with like minded bona fide souls and not with those persons who have got

ulterior motives. Evil company is to be avoided. We should perform Harināma avoiding the tenfold offences.

You have rightly said that association of a true devotee is essential for spiritual devotional amelioration. A true devotee is rarely to be found in this world. If you want quality, you cannot get quantity.

Even if we, by previous eternal good deeds, come in contact with a true devotee, we cannot submit to him sincerely and wholeheartedly. It is very difficult to give up our mundane egotism which we have acquired by cycles of births and deaths after being averse to Śrī Krishna. But there is no cause for disappointment. If we sincerely try, God and His Personal Associates will come to help us and rescue us.

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## **Serving Viṣṇu and Vaiṣṇavas**

I am happy and encouraged to see your initiative and aptitude to serve Viṣṇu and vaiṣṇavas. The eternal nature of the real self, jīva soul, is to serve Śrī Viṣṇu and vaiṣṇavas. When we are averse to Them, the illusory energy of Viṣṇu Bhagavān envelops us and we get two kinds of defects:

- (i) Forgetfulness of our real self that we are an eternal servant of Śrī Krishna, and
- (ii) Misconception of self that we are the body.



Repugnance to the service of Śrī Krishna and his devotees is the cause of nescience. Nescience, i.e. ignorance, is the cause of misidentification of the self. Misidentification of the self is the cause of material desires. Material desires are the cause of committing sins. Committing sins is the cause of suffering. So the root cause of suffering is averseness to serving Śrī Krishna. Those jīvas are blessed who have got the aptitude to serve Śrī Krishna and Krishna bhaktas. Wherever we shall devote our energy, we shall go there. We shall become attached to those things. So, the wise always devote their mind, intelligence, senses, words and everything for the service of Śrī Krishna.

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**Question to Śrīla Gurudev** - (1) *I left my job and hometown to stay with the devotees in another city. Now I am feeling very much drawn toward my previous way of living and the people. I am not able to adjust with devotees here. It seems that all my attempts to be with devotees are without success and I have to keep at some distance from them. Now I do not have a place to live. How should I maintain myself? (2) For entering into family life, whose disciple my husband should be? How can I know if we are suited to each other? How can I recognise a devotee with whom I would be able to live a life in the service of the Lord? What qualities should the devotee possess so that I could entrust my life to him?*

## **Be guided by the realised souls**

Whenever I submitted difficult problems to my Most Revered Gurudev, He used to give me the advice not to take any decision by own initiative, as the mind and intellect of a finite being (conditioned soul) is also finite and prone to commit mistakes. Any decision taken by the finite mind and finite intellect can increase problems. The correct way is to take absolute shelter of the Lotus Feet of the

Supreme Lord and His Absolute Counterpart, gurudev or śuddha bhakta, who are omniscient and All-Merciful. A light of Transcendental Divine Knowledge will then enter into the heart of such a surrendered soul and remove all their doubts. All problems will be solved by it immediately and effectively. I mean to say, in short, we should not be carried away by our finite mental and intellectual feelings. One should be guided by the realised souls. Finite individual souls of this world by their finite intellect can never solve their own problems nor of others as they are enveloped by illusory energy. They have misconception of the self and misunderstand their actual requirements. Further difficulty is that the association of a bona fide śuddha bhakta or sadguru is very scarce. Our only hope is this the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna, has said in the Gītā, 'If anybody is sincere, he will never be deceived'. God exists in the heart of every soul and knows everything. Nobody can do good or bad acts without His knowledge and the Supreme Lord is controlling the fruits of the actions of all. We can do actions but can have no hold over the fruits of actions.

'To those who always worship Śrī Krishna with sincerity of heart, the Supreme Lord bestows wisdom to understand the way to attain Him.' (Bhagavad Gītā 10.10)

Nārada Goswāmī's instruction to Dhruva was— 'One who wants to attain God should not blame others for his troubles and worries. All reap the fruits of their own actions' Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, 4th Canto.

The last message of His Divine Grace Most Revered Paramgurudev Śrīmad Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Goswāmī Ṭhākura to His disciples before His disappearance was—'Don't be disheartened by seeing that the majority of the people of the world are not accepting service of Śrī Krishna (devotion to Śrī Krishna) without deceitfulness. Don't give up your worship and your only spiritual wealth of hearing and chanting Krishna-katha. Always do Hari-kīrtan being humbler than a blade of grass and more tolerant than a tree. All arrangements in this world are momentary.'

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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**Question to Śrīla Gurudev** - *Please explain the last line of the verse of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 11.2.37 (bhaktyaikayeśaṁ guru-devatātmā) - to accept Śrīla Gurudev as our ātmā and our worshipping deity. It is not fully clear to me. Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Krishna are our worshipable deities and we should fully surrender to Them. But I also read that Śrīla Gurudev is my worshipable deity and that I should surrender fully unto Him. How to reconcile this?*

## **Material designations**

The ātmā is sacchidānanda—an eternally existing entity of knowledge and blissfulness. Upādhi means 'denomination or denotation' which an individual gets due to contact with the body and sense organs (gross and subtle). We get any designation by our actions in this world. A person may be a doctor, professor, engineer or have any other qualification due to his karma (action) and this is termed as upādhi. Brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya, śūdra, brahmacharya, gr̥hasta, vānaprastha and sannyāsa (the four varṇas and four āśrama), any denotation regarding his birth in any country, any material ego, any relationship with the world or universe—are all upādhi. We should be completely freed from any relationship with the non-eternal world.

## **Guru is the regulator**

Fear comes when there is misconception of self. He who is averse to the Supreme Lord is ensnared by the Lord's illusory energy and is affected by two defects— misidentification of self with the body and forgetfulness of real self. The wise will understand that worship of Krishna with devout one-pointed devotion is the only remedy, for which taking shelter of a bona fide guru is

essential, in the knowledge that guru is the regulator and also the dearest.

For consistency, adjustment and harmony, we shall have to go through the teachings of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam repeatedly and very ardently. If there is no such enthusiasm or determination, we will be foredoomed to failure. We have heard that Śrī Krishna Dvaipāyana Vedavyāsa Muni (who is accepted as guru by all sects in India), could not get tranquility of mind after expanding or dividing the vedas into four categories (Ṛg, Yajur, Sāma, and Atharva), and after writing vedānta (Brahmasūtra), the Mahābhārata (which includes the Gītā) and the 18 Purāṇas. Therefore He had to play the pastimes of remembering his guru (Nārada Goswāmī) at the holy place Badrinath dhām and praying for his grace. Nārada Goswāmī appeared before him and disciplined him, saying whatever he had done was wrong and advised him to sing the glories of Śrī Krishna, only for Krishna's satisfaction, and not for dharma, artha, kāma, non-eternal benefits, and not even for salvation, to merge with the impersonal formless Brahman. By the imparted grace of Nārada Goswāmī, Vedavyāsa Muni meditated on the four verses of the Bhāgavatam (chaturśloki Bhāgavatam), wrote the Bhāgavatam consisting of twelve cantos and eighteen thousand verses, and got eternal bliss.

Here it should be noted very carefully that even if anybody hears about Bhāgavatam innumerable times, it can never become stale. Śrī Vrindāvan Das Ṭhākura in his treatise, Śrī Chaitanya Bhāgavat, has written that Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, after hearing Dhruva chāritra (4th canto) and Prahlād chāritra (7th canto) of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam a hundred times from Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita Goswāmī, wanted to hear about those topics again and again. Śabda-brahma - Transcendental Sound - can never become stale. At every hearing complete ambrosia of Harikatha will be relished afresh.

## **Associate with sādhus**

In regard to the above query, you are to go through or hear about Kapila-

Devahūti samvād 3rd canto, 25th Chapter, of the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, again and again. The summary of the dialogue between Mother Devahūti and Kapila Bhagavān is as follows: Mother Devahūti inquired, ,For so long I was infatuated by Your illusory energy and I wanted a son. I have realised this just after Your appearance. Please tell me how I can deliver myself from my entanglement in non-eternal desires?‘

Kapila Bhagavān smiled and said, ,You have no worldly desires, otherwise I could not have appeared in you. Your heart is pure and sanctified. You have no attachment. Your query is for the eternal benefit of the conditioned souls of the world. I shall reply to your query for the benefit of the enslaved jīvas.

Certainly, the mind is the cause of attachment, but the mind is also the cause of emancipation. When the mind is attached to the external potency of the Supreme Lord (triguṇa) consisting of the three primeval qualities— sattva, rajaḥ and tamaḥ, it causes bondage. When the mind is attached to nirguṇa (Transcendental) Bhagavān, it causes deliverance from the clutches of Māyā (illusory energy).‘

Mother Devahūti again asked, ,Please explain clearly what triguṇa is and how votaries can have attachment to God (nirguṇa Bhagavān)?‘

Kapila Bhagavān replied, ,It is already stated that triguṇa is sattva, rajaḥ and tamaḥ, the three primeval qualities of the external potency of the Supreme Lord. By rajo- guṇa living beings are created, by sattva-guṇa they are sustained and by tamo-guṇa they are destroyed. The body is triguṇa because it is born by rajo-guṇa, it exists for some time by sattva-guṇa, and is destroyed by tamo-guṇa. Attachment to the body and to other bodily relationships is the cause of firm bondage. How can an aspirant get attachment to God (Bhagavān), because He is not speaking and there is no exchange of thoughts with Him, except in rare cases? How can aspirants get attachment to nirguṇa Bhagavān? Although knowing fully well that all mundane relationships are most transitory, still, because of their connection with the body, they become attached to them. But sādhus are moving and talking in this world. If any votary associates with the sādhus sincerely, then by the process of six-fold behavior— to give and take, to offer food and take prasādam, and to divulge their heart to sādhus— the sādhu will open his heart.‘

## Who is a sādhu?

Mother Devahūti again inquired, 'Who is a sādhu? How does one recognise a sādhu? What are the characteristics?'

Kapila Bhagavān said, 'There are two kinds of characteristics of sādhus. There is the original qualification, and when that original qualification exists, taṭastha characteristics will be manifested, which may be indicated as concomitant qualities.' First, the accompanying characteristics are explained:

*titikṣavaḥ kārūṇikāḥ suhṛdaḥ sarva-dehinām ajāta-śatravaḥ śāntāḥ sādhaḥ  
sādhu-bhūṣaṇāḥ*

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 3.25.21)

'Forbearance, compassion, well-wishing friendliness to all living-beings, no vision of foes (as sādhus see all as coming from the same source and thus inter-related), calmness, serenity and simple heartedness.'

The original qualities are then described:

*mayy ananyena bhāvena bhaktim kurvanti ye dṛḍhām mat-kṛte tyakta-karmāṇas  
tyakta-svajana-bāndhavāḥ*

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 3.25.22)

'Exclusive and firm, one-pointed devotion to the Supreme Lord, giving up karma (varṇāśrama dharma) and kinsmen for worship of Bhagavān, sincerely hearing

and speaking Harikatha with the sole object of serving the Supreme Lord and not for any other ulterior motive.'

Such devotees may play the pastimes of being sick but they do not feel the pangs of diseases as their minds are fully engrossed in thinking about their object of worship.

Although Śrī Krishna, Śrī Rāmachandra, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu are the Supreme Lord, they accepted a guru. Why? To teach the votaries that taking shelter of a guru is essential.

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**Question to Śrīla Gurudev** - *I am seeking a very deep and bonding relationship with you, gurudev. I want to be completely absorbed in the service of your lotus feet. I want to be engaged in this service 24 hours a day with my body, mind and speech. Without your mercy and direct leadership over my entire life, any sādhana that I could artificially perform, may only bring damage to my faith and life. Please advise me what I should do, how I should lead my life from now on?*

## **Surrender necessary to receive instructions**

Received your letter through e-mail and noted the contents. It is good that you have opened your heart's doubts sincerely. You have mentioned in your letter partially about one verse of the Gītā (2.7)- 'kārpaṇya-doṣopahata-svabhāvaḥ prcchāmi tvāṁ dharma- sammūḍha-cetāḥ, yac chreyaḥ syān niścitaṁ brūhi tan me śiṣyas te 'haṁ śādhi mām tvāṁ prapannam'. Briefly to say, Arjuna made the pastime of being extremely infatuated by seeing his kinsmen and objects of his regard and worship in the battlefield in front of him before fight. He mourned and gave up his desire to fight. Śrī Krishna reproached Arjuna by saying, "This

sort of your deliberation in the battlefield is unwarranted. Give up this weakness of heart and be ready to fight." On being reproached by his most beloved object of worship Krishna, Arjuna took shelter in Him, his Eternal Master and prayed to show him the path of eternal welfare. That is the purport of the above verse. Krishna then started giving him instructions. As long as we do not take unconditional absolute shelter to guru- vaiṣṇava, there will be no impetus for Them to give instructions. To know the actual teachings of the Gītā, we should go through the instructions of a bonafide personal associate of Śrī Krishna. I shall advise you to go through the explanation of Gītā written by Bhaktivinode Ṭhākur.

## **Misconception of the self**

Śrīla Bhaktivinode Ṭhākur has stated in his book 'Śrī Bhajan-rahasya' that there are four drawbacks for the votaries to get success in devotional worship, viz.

- (1) misconception of self
- (2) evil non-eternal desires
- (3) weakness of heart
- (4) propensity to commit offence

The actual origin of these four hindrances is 'misconception of self'. Due to misconception of self, we have evil non-eternal desires, weakness of heart and committal of offence to the Supreme Lord and His devotees. The enslaved jīva has been hurled down into this prison house of the world and is passing through cycles of births and deaths due to his forgetfulness of his relationship with Śrī Krishna. God has given the power of discrimination in the human birth so that he can discriminate between bad and good, eternal and non-eternal. Due to previous good impressions of eternal good deeds (knowingly or unknowingly serving the



Supreme Lord and His personal associates) they get the aptitude to enquire about Eternal Truth and can come in contact with a realised soul - a pure devotee.

## **Actual association**

Association with bona fide devotees is essential to awaken the eternal nature of the real self to have the aptitude to worship the Supreme Lord. If any votary sincerely has the desire to get the company of a bona fide sādhu, he will get it by the grace of the Supreme Lord. The Supreme Lord is Omniscient, Omnipotent and gracious to all. He is residing in the hearts of all living beings in this world and He knows everything. Krishna says in the Gītā, 'na hi kalyāṇa-kṛt kaścid durgatim tāta gacchati'- 'A sincere soul will never be deceived.' The Supreme Lord is equal to all and is completely impartial. It is not the fact that if a neophyte devotee externally remains in a great distant place he is unable to associate with bona fide sādhus. Mere proximity of the sādhu and direct physical contact with the sādhu will not give the actual benefit. When bugs are there in the bed of a bona fide sādhu and in direct contact with the sādhu, are they associating with the sādhu or sucking his blood? Exploitation of sādhu is not association of sādhu. Remaining at a distance, if anybody follows the instruction of a bona fide sādhu and practically acts upon those instructions, it will be considered actual association of the sādhu. As for example, Dhruva saw his gurudev once and got instruction from him only once, but his spiritual life was successful because he sincerely accepted the teachings of gurudev and acted upon the instructions.

I shall continue to stay at Calcutta up to Śrī Krishna Janmashtami function. After that, Supreme Lord willing, I may go to Hyderabad Maṭh and Bangalore for a fortnight. On return to Calcutta, I have given word to devotees of Bhatinda to observe Dāmodar vratā in our big Maṭh there. I may reach there on 22nd October, 2004.

May All-Merciful Śrī Guru Gaurāṅga and Rādhā - Krishna bless you.

My love to you all.

Affectionately yours, Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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## **The sādhu fulfills the desire of the Lord**

I was away from Calcutta with a party to participate in the Annual Function of our Puri Maṭh, solemnised on the occasion of Ratha-Yatra. I had to return immediately to Calcutta to go to Agartala although my health was not fit to undertake the journey. Annual Functions, both at Puri and Agartala were grandly celebrated. I returned to Calcutta with the party and now I have the opportunity to go through your letter.

Our Most Revered Gurudev often used to say while delivering sermons, 'An actual guru never thinks himself as a competent guru and advises others with the idea of rescuing them from the clutches of Māyā.' A real guru, a real sādhu, a real devotee, always tries to satisfy his Eternal Object of worship, the Supreme Lord. He never deviates from the target of satisfying his Object of worship. The Supreme Lord has love for all living beings and always wants them to come to Him willingly with submission.

But due to misuse of their relative independence, they do not want to worship Him, or more correctly to say, to love Him. They want to enjoy this world, being enveloped by the illusory energy of three primeval qualities— sattva, rajas and tamas. So, God has to create so many species of life and universes to fulfill the desires of the misguided, conditioned souls.

The Supreme Lord is Omnipotent. He can do whatever He likes, but He does not want to destroy the relative independence of the conditioned souls and forcibly interfere in their discretion. If consciousness is destroyed, the Supreme Lord and

the living beings both will be deprived of getting an actual relationship of love and bliss. God wants that the conditioned souls willingly love and serve Him, retaining their relative independence. The target of a bona fide guru or sādhu will be fulfilled if they can persuade the misguided, conditioned souls to submit and engage fully for the service of their Eternal Master, the Supreme Lord. An outside third person may see externally that one is acting as a guru by helping some willing persons to worship the Lord by giving mantra and instructions and those receivers of instructions are disciples. But actually guru is not making disciples. His target is to satisfy the Supreme Lord.

## **Bhāgavat dharma is true dharma**

We observed guru-pūrṇimā pūjā tithi on 21st July. Guru-pūrṇimā pūjā tithi means observance of the appearance day ceremony of Krishna Dvaipayana Vedavyāsa Muni, who appeared accepting Parashara Ṛṣi and Satyavati Devi as parents. Vedavyāsa Muni is worshipped throughout India by all groups of worshippers— karmīs, jñānīs, yogīs and bhaktas. Vedavyāsa Muni expanded the Vedas in four categories, Ṛg, Yajur, Sāma, and Atharva, wrote 18 Purāṇas, Vedānta (the highest scriptural evidence of the jñānīs), Mahabhārata and within it Gītā, but failed to get tranquility of mind—actual bliss. It is a long history; it will not be good to elaborate the subject here. Vedavyāsa Muni submitted to his gurudev Nārada Goswāmī at Badrinārāyaṇ and expressed his problem that in spite of writing so many scriptures for fulfilling the desires of the human beings — dharma (piety), artha (wealth), kāma (fulfillment of ulterior desires) and mokṣa (salvation or merging into impersonal formless Brahma or merging into the personal God)—he could not get eternal bliss. Nārada Goswāmī, as guru, said that whatever Śrī Vedavyāsa did, his works were harmful to all, as conditioned souls have a natural tendency for non-eternal material benefits and he did more serious harm to them by prescribing mokṣa. Evidence of this is in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 1st Canto, 1st Chapter, 2nd verse 'dharmah projjhita-kaitavo 'tra paramo nirmatsarāṇām satām...' Here the highest dharma is stated to be bhāgavat dharma, completely negating all other motives— dharma, artha, kāma and mokṣa.

## The suicidal act

Also, it is stated in Śrī Chaitanya Charitāmrita, Adi, 1.90, 92 —

*ajñāna-tamera nāma kahiye 'kaitava' dharma-artha-kāma-mokṣa-vāñchā ādi  
saba tāra madhye mokṣa-vāñchā kaitava-pradhāna yāhā haite kṛṣṇa-bhakti  
haya antardhāna*

'Darkest ignorance is deceitfulness. Worldly piety, wealth and other ulterior desires emerge from ignorance. Extreme deceitfulness is desire for mokṣa—merging oneself in Impersonal Formless Brahma or merging in the personal God. By this suicidal act Krishna bhakti will totally disappear.'

To have a clear idea, you should go through the two verses of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, 10th Canto, 2nd Chapter, verses 32-33—

*ye 'nye 'ravindākṣa vimukta-māninas tvayy asta-bhāvād aviśuddha-buddhayaḥ  
āruhya kṛcchreṇa param padaṁ tataḥ patanty adho 'nāḍṛta-yuṣmad-aṅghrayaḥ  
tathā na te mādharma tāvakāḥ kvacid bhraśyanti mārgāt tvayi baddha-sauhṛdāḥ  
tvayābhiguptā vicaranti nirbhayā vināyakanīkapa-mūrdhasu prabho*

O Lotus Eyed Supreme Lord! Non-devotees who think themselves falsely as perfectly emancipated from worldly ego conception, are not holy. These jñānī strivers, by the process of ascension, think themselves emancipated by their immense hard austerity. They have no adoration to your Lotus Feet which are the shelter of all. So, they fall down and also get into a more abominable state. O Mādhav! Your pure devotees have firm love for you. They never deviate like strivers who are falsely thinking themselves to be emancipated, so they do not fall down. The pure devotees, being well protected by you, can move in this world without any fear over the heads of the leaders of their opponents.

You have the desire to participate in Vrajamaṇḍal parikrama with two new aspirants. Everything depends upon the desire of the Supreme Lord, Śrī Krishna, Who is All- Good. If your coming with the two aspirants or any other devotees is

finalised, you are to inform Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñān Hṛṣīkeś Mahārāj in Calcutta Maṭh as well as Śrī Bhakti Kushal Padmanābh Mahārāj at Vrindāvan Maṭh for proper arrangement of your stay in different camps. Śrī Bhakti Vichar Viṣṇu Mahārāj is in charge of this and he has made special arrangements for foreign devotees, as I have heard.

Hope this will find you all in good health and spirit. May All-Merciful Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga and Rādhā-Krishna bless you all. My love to you all.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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## **The protector and sustainer**

Revered affectionate mother,

Glad to receive your blessings through your beloved son. I remember having received one letter from you but I beg to be excused for not giving reply to that letter. You are already aware of my present health condition.

Our doctors and friends are always advising me to take rest. Although I understand the direction of the doctors and advice of my friends, I cannot remain indifferent to essential duties to be done by me as per order of my Most Revered Gurudev. I am to look into the urgent works of the institution and to do the duty of giving initiation. To lessen the pressure, devotees advise me to do the duty of giving initiation taking proper rest with intervals.

I reached Calcutta Maṭh on 17th June, 2007. Previously I was in Delhi, Chandigarh, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Assam and other places in India. My present

health condition is better. I am somehow pulling on and doing my duty by your affectionate blessing.

Actually, sannyāsīs (ascetics) have nothing of their own in the Maṭhs. Everything is donated by household devotees. Ascetics have renounced worldly relationships like parents but God is sustaining and maintaining them through many parents. His Divine Grace Śrīmad Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Deva Goswāmī Mahārāj is the elder godbrother of our Most Revered Gurudev and they are intimately connected. He is one of the dearest disciples of Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Goswāmī Ṭhākur. He is our śiksha-guru. I am grateful to you for reminding me about him to pray for his grace. When we do not get the opportunity of associating with pure devotees, we are to go through their teachings. Especially his writings are very impressive and sweet. His Divine Grace Om Viṣṇupad 108 Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Goswāmī Ṭhākur is the personal associate of the Supreme Lord, Śrī Krishna, who appeared in this world when darkness descended on the horizon of pure devotion. Although all scriptures, the Vedas, Brahmasutra (Vedānta), Mahābhārat, Gītā, 18 Purāṇas, quintessence of all scriptures Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, Śrī Chaitanya Charitāmrita, Śrī Chaitanya Bhāgavat and also the writings of the Sadgoswāmīs (six Goswāmīs) are present, no learned person could understand the implication of the teachings of the scriptures. Many pseudo sects cropped up. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, the Most Munificent Form of Godhead, out of compassion, sent His own persons, Śrīla Bhaktivinode Ṭhākur and Śrīla Saraswatī Goswāmī Ṭhākur, to rescue the conditioned souls from ignorance and to show the actual devotional path. Unfortunate persons, who were enveloped by illusory energy, might have done heinous crimes to defame the extraordinary great personality Śrīla Saraswatī Goswāmī Ṭhākur. Although Saraswatī Goswāmī Ṭhākur did not do anything against them and tolerated all tortures, the Supreme Lord punished those persons. By His extraordinary personality, śuddha Krishna bhakti is spread throughout the world. The Supreme Lord is the protector and sustainer of all His bona fide devotees. For instance, we can give the illustration of the biographies of Prahlād Mahārāj and Ambarīṣa Mahārāj in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam. Hiranyakaśipu and Durvasa ṛṣi acted harshly only to prove the unparalleled spiritual personalities of Prahlād and Ambarīṣa Mahārāj. You have also mentioned the illustration of Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākur. He was attached to a harlot at first, but being reproached by her, his mind changed and he became a great devotee of Krishna. There is no need of narrating the history.

## Śuddha bhakti is inherent

The Supreme Lord is residing in the hearts of every living being and He has actual love for all. All are from Krishna, by Krishna and in Krishna. Eternal causeless devotion naturally exists in every soul. Due to the aversion of conditioned souls to Śrī Krishna, they are enveloped by the dirt of worldly desires. The illustration can be given of magnet and iron. It is the nature of a magnet to attract iron and the nature of iron is to be attracted by a magnet. But if magnet and iron are near and there is no attraction, it is due to the dirt or rust on the iron. Śuddha bhakti is not to be borrowed from somebody, it is inherent in every jīva. It is to be manifested by the company of a bona fide śuddha bhakta. Association of a śuddha bhakta, therefore, is essential. From a distant place also we can have association of sādhus by sincerely following their heart. Remaining outwardly in contact with a sādhu is not the association of a sādhu. As for example, bugs remain in the beds of the sādhus and lice in the heads of the sādhus. They are not associating with the sādhus, they are exploiting the sādhus.

I am fortunate that by your letter you have inspired me to correct myself. Accept my daṇḍavat praṇāms. May All-Merciful Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga and Rādhā-Krishna bless us all.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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**Question to Śrīla Gurudev** - *I have Śrīmad Bhāgavatam in English with purport by Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj. I have been reading it for several years when I was told recently that I should receive gurudev's permission to read the Book. That is why I am asking you: can I read Bhāgavatam? I have a poor understanding of foreign languages (Bengali, Hindi and English). Is it necessary*

*to understand Hari-katha with one's intelligence?*

## **Read Bhāgavatam with great reverence**

The Supreme Lord, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, has instructed us to practise five principal forms of devotion— association of sādhus, chanting of Holy Names, hearing Bhāgavatam, dwelling in Mathura and serving Deities with firm faith. Hearing of Bhāgavatam is one of the principal forms of devotion. It is necessary first to hear Bhāgavatam from a bona fide true devotee for being entitled to read Bhāgavatam.

As Most Revered, His Holiness Tridaṇḍī Swāmī, Śrīmad Bhaktivedanta Swāmī Mahārāj was the disciple of our Most Revered Paramgurudev, Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Goswāmī Ṭhākur, there cannot be any objection to going through the translation written by him. A devotee should not go through Bhāgavatam without devotion, like ordinary readers. Instead, devotees should read Bhāgavatam with great reverence and devotion, after praying for the grace of Guru- Vaishnav-Bhagavān. The significance of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, which is one with Śrī Krishna, will be revealed to a bona fide surrendered soul. It is not possible to realise the inner significance of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam by intellectual and mental capacity. Our Paramguru-pādpadma, Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Goswāmī Ṭhākur, used to say, 'bhakti cannot be propagated by a non-devotee by ornamental rhetoric language'.

When a bona fide true devotee, who has the sole purpose of propitiating Śrī Krishna, reads Bhāgavatam, his words are transcendental as such. Then one can feel spiritual and devotional vibration in their soul even if they do not understand its meaning.

Worldly educated persons cannot exactly interpret the teachings of a devotee. You should hear interpretation also from a true devotee. In this consideration, is a befitting person to interpret as he has a good hold over devotional conclusions and has enough knowledge of Bengali and Sanskrit. In short, whatever



devotional forms we practice, the target should be correct, i.e. the target should be for the satisfaction of Śrī Krishna and His devotees. We should be very careful in regard to this so that we do not miss the target.

May All-Merciful Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga bless you. We are so-so. Hope this will find you all in good health and spirits. My love to you.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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**Question to Śrīla Gurudev** - (1) *Are there gradations of madhyama adhikāri?* (2) *Is it possible to have a small trace of ruchi during anartha nivritti? If so, how does one tell the difference between real and imaginary taste?* (3) *Does a devotee ever really know his stage of advancement i.e. the most advanced devotees seem to claim that they are not at all advanced while those that claim to be advanced rarely are?*

## **Stages of devotional development**

I am encouraged to know your enquiry to understand a votary's position in the stages of devotional development as well as your reference to one verse of Bhaktirasāmṛta Sindhu, Pūrva Vibhāg, to enquire about the gradual progress of the votary to get the highest stage, 'prema'.

'Adhikāri' means competency. This topic is discussed elaborately in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, 11th Canto, 2nd Chapter. These three grades of eligibility of the votary, kaniṣṭha, madhyam and uttam, are discussed there. Havi Muni, one of the nine young sons of Śrī Rishabhdeva, narrated about this topic to Nimi, the king of Videha—

*arcāyām eva haraye pūjām yaḥ śraddhayehate na tad-bhakteṣu cānyeṣu sa bhaktaḥ prākṛtaḥ smṛtaḥ*

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 11.2.47)

## **First stage devotee**

The votary who worships the Deity of the Supreme Lord, Śrī Hari, with faith and only for His satisfaction, but does not have the aptitude to worship the devotees and also none else, is stated to be in the category of 'prākṛita vaiṣṇava', i.e., low status devotee. The first low status worshipper is considered to be a vaiṣṇava, because of his faith that the Supreme Lord is One and by serving the Supreme Lord he is serving all demigods and other objects of worship. But, he has no aptitude to serve devotees. Where there is no belief in One Supreme Lord or that by serving the Supreme Lord all are served, he will not be considered even a kaniṣṭha vaiṣṇava. As for example, you cannot have the conception of a king without subjects and subjects without a king. Both are correlative terms. In like manner, the Supreme Lord and His devotees are both interconnected. We cannot have conception of devotees without the devoted and devoted without the devotees. So, kaniṣṭha vaiṣṇava has no accurate knowledge of the conception of the Supreme Lord that He cannot be without the devotees. The kaniṣṭha vaiṣṇava has the inertia of dullness due to an incomplete conception of the Supreme Lord.

## **Second stage devotee**

The second highest category of devotees is madhyam adhikāri vaiṣṇava. To understand the qualification of a madhyam adhikāri, Havi Muni has said: ,He is entitled to be a madhyam adhikāri, who has love for the Supreme Lord, friendly relationships with devotees, compassion for the ignorant and indifference towards hostile persons.’ Actually śuddha bhakti starts from madhyam adhikāra because here the votary has the aptitude to serve the vaiṣṇavas. He behaves compassionately to the ignorant who are simple hearted and non-deceitful and remains aloof from the persons who are hostile, because if he speaks something to them, they will commit more offence to God and His personal associates. So, it is better to ignore them without discussing anything. Here in madhyam adhikāra, we find four kinds of behaviour.

## Highest devotee

Uttam adhikāri vaiṣṇava is the highest devotee. Havi Muni narrates the qualification of uttam adhikāri in this way: ,One who sees his own existence and the existence of the Supreme Lord in all living beings and realises the existence of all living beings in his own self as well as in the Supreme Lord is considered to be the highest bhāgavat or vaiṣṇava.’

*sthāvara-jaṅgama dekhe, nā dekhe tāra mūrti sarvatra haya tāra iṣṭa-deva-sphūrti*

(Śrī Chaitanya Charitāmrita, Madhya, 8.273)

‘The Transcendental Divine Love of realised devotees is such that whatever they see, immobile things or mobile living beings, they see the manifestation of the divine relationship of Krishna everywhere, without seeing their outside external

forms.'

The accurate realisation of the highest vaiṣṇava indicates that he perceives that all are connected with the Supreme Lord directly or indirectly, i.e. all are directly or indirectly serving the Supreme Lord.

To whatever extent the connection with or realisation of the beauty or sweetness of the Supreme Lord exists in the devotees, to that same extent, will be the depth of their humbleness. When we see things inferior to us, we shall have the feeling that we are superior to them and we shall have vanity. On going through the conditions of the three adhikāris as stated above, the votary should judge in which category he belongs.

My love to you all. May Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga and Rādhā-Krishna bless you.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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**Question to Śrīla Gurudev** - *Since receiving your last letter I have been trying to study (as you suggested) Śrīla Rūpā Goswāmīpad's Śrī Upadeśāmṛta, the purports of Śrīla Bhaktivinode Ṭhākura, Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja. So far, I have studied the first four verses several times and have some questions (1) A bona-fide guru must have the 6 urges controlled but there is more to his qualifications than this. So why is it stated in 1st verse that such person can make disciples? (2) In verse two, we are instructed to avoid association with persons who are opposed to bhakti. While living in this mundane world, we are always in contact with many people who are opposed to the process of bhakti. As neophyte devotees, how should we associate with these people? (3) In verse three, we are told that bhakti may be obtained by being enthusiastic, and having patience. But how do we get this enthusiasm while staying away from sādhu sanga? (4) My gurudev has instructed to me to preach in the local area where I live, therefore I humbly ask for your blessings so that I may be able to represent the words of our guru-varga*

*cent-per-cent and promote the teachings of my beloved guardians (such as yourself ) with some success.*

## **Practise yukta-vairāgya**

Śrīla Bhaktivinode Ṭhākura has said in his explanation of the first verse of Upadeśāmṛta, 'The conditioned souls who had previous impressions of eternal good deeds, i.e., impressions achieved by serving God and His devotees knowingly or unknowingly, have the impetus to worship God. By the Lord's grace, coming in contact with a bona fide Grace-Incarnate Form guru, one can get the knowledge of relationship with the Supreme Lord. That blessed conditioned soul is entitled to go through Upadeśāmṛta written by Śrīla Rūpā Goswāmī for devotional enhancement. But there are two categories of votaries—household devotees and ascetic devotees. The first verse to control the six urges is principally required for the household devotee. Only those who have controlled the six urges are entitled to be real ascetics.' But again in his commentary, 'Pīyūṣavarṣiṇī Vṛitti' in Bengali, he has stated, 'When a novice starts the practice of devotion, the above six urges will create hindrance to his getting enhancement in devotional practice. The bona fide aspirant can remove the hindrances by the association of the pure bona fide devotees, by doing Harinām without the tenfold offences and with exclusive submission to God. Devotees practise yukta-vairāgya positively by the actual renunciation of engaging mind, intellect, words and sense organs in the service of the Lord and His devotees and negatively by withdrawing the gross and subtle sense organs from the respective material objects. Devotees have no aptitude for practising sushka-vairāgya (external abnegation without the positive side of engaging all sense organs for the service of Krishna).

## **The purpose of Maths**

Here by the word 'gṛha-tyāgi', Bhaktivinode Ṭhākura indicates Paramhaṁsa Babajis like the Sadgoswāmīs (six Goswāmīs). But Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Goswāmī Ṭhākura cogitated that in this Kaliyuga such pure ascetic devotees would be very rare. We, ordinary conditioned souls, have no knowledge of hindsight and foresight. Śrīla Saraswatī Goswāmī Ṭhākura realised the gradually deteriorating moral state of the conditioned souls in the future, in this black age. Nowadays, the aspirants desirous of worshipping the Lord sincerely from the core of the heart will find difficulty in performing all devotional forms wholeheartedly, remaining in the house. Also, they are not capable of performing bhajan like the realised elevated souls, Sad-goswāmīs, as complete renouncers.

As such, for giving scope to the intending novice votaries, he started establishing Maṭhs where they can get a congenial atmosphere to perform bhajan. These Maṭhs are in the middle of complete asceticism on one side and uncongenial disturbed household conditions on the other. Śrīla Saraswatī Goswāmī Ṭhākura, knowing fully well about the aspirant's defects and inability to control sense organs, allows him to be admitted into the Maṭh for starting bhajan, only seeing his slight inclination for worship of the Lord. The novice will find a completely better atmosphere in the Maṭh and congeniality to do all forms of devotion as per scriptural injunctions. Of course, enhancement in bhajan will depend on one's sincere intensity.

Śrīla Bhaktivinode Ṭhākura has stated in his writing, that those who can tolerate the urges of senses, can govern the whole world. The word 'sisyāt' does not indicate making disciples, but indicates the qualification for governing the worldly people.

## **Sādhu gives mantra to satisfy God**

A sincere guru or a sincere sādhu or devotee can never think of himself as guru or sādhu who has the right to make disciples and control others. They are the best servitors of the Lord and His devotees. The Lord will be satisfied if

unfortunate conditioned souls, being averse to Him and enveloped by the illusory energy and thrown into this pit of births, deaths and unbearable suffering, are rescued and brought to the Lotus Feet of the Supreme Lord for their eternal welfare. A true devotee of the Lord always sincerely endeavours to serve the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna and engage others in His service. When they give Harinām and mantra to intending aspirants, a third person may see that the sādhu who is giving mantra is guru and the aspirant who is taking mantra is disciple. But actually a true devotee or guru does not do this with the false ego of being guru or sādhu. The fortunate aspirant should recognise a true devotee or true guru by his behaviour and movements. Krishna says in the Gītā, 'A sincere votary will never be deceived'. God will give him the wisdom to understand a sincere sādhu.

## Qualities of a guru

The actual qualities of a guru have been stated in Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad —'śrotriyaṁ and brahma-niṣṭham.' The aspirant must get Divine Knowledge through a bona fide preceptorial channel and from a guru who has practical realisation of the Divinity. There are stages of gurus and devotees. In the highest stage, they see their object of worship everywhere and all are worshipping Krishna positively and negatively. So the highest devotee, uttam bhāgavat, cannot actually instruct anybody. The highest devotee uttam bhāgavat in the pastimes of madhyam bhāgavat sees four differences namely:

- God,
- devotee of the Supreme Lord
- simple hearted genuine persons who actually want to worship God but have no clear knowledge
- hostile persons

The madhyam bhāgavat has love for Krishna, friendly relationships with devotees, compassion for the sincere souls and remains aloof from hostile persons. To speak elaborately on the basic principles for enhancement of devotion, in a letter, is not possible.

## **The Maṭh hospitals**

It has been stated earlier that nowadays in this black age so many things of attraction have been invented that people become victims of those attractions and as a result their minds become diverted. Nobody is to be blamed for this. It is due to our own previous actions, that we are getting such an atmosphere and day-by-day, deterioration of morality and anti-devotional thinking is increasing. Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Goswāmī Ṭhākura, feeling this precarious condition of the aspirants to worship the Lord, introduced the system of Maṭhs in different places where aspirants can get the company of bona fide sādhus. But here carefully note one thing— these Maṭhs are like hospitals for the treatment of diseased persons, where there must be some spiritual doctors. When there is a lack of association of higher status vaiṣṇavas, devotees should go through the writings of the bona fide guruvara and vaiṣṇavas. There is no other alternative. Even in a Maṭh, there should be regular classes of chanting and hearing. Otherwise, the purpose of establishing Maṭhs will not be fulfilled. God is residing in the heart of every conditioned soul. He is Omniscient and Omnipotent. God is everywhere and His personal associates are everywhere. They will surely come to help the sincere aspirants.

## **Purpose of preaching**

The purpose of preaching should not be to rectify others. We are to practise śravaṇa bhakti, kīrtana bhakti, smaraṇa bhakti for our own benefit. If we can correct ourselves, then preaching will be automatic. It is natural that when we come in contact with higher status vaiṣṇavas, we become more enthusiastic. But it is not



practically possible to get such company always. Such sādhus are very rare. Under any circumstance, a neophyte aspirant should not be disheartened. He should not stop bhajan. Praying for the grace of Śrīla Bhaktivinode Ṭhākura, Śrīla Sarasvatī Goswāmī Ṭhākura and guruvarga from the core of the heart, they will surely give you power to do good to yourself and others.

My love to you all. May All-Merciful Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga and Rādhā-Krishna bless you.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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## **Adjust with the environment**

I know that he has got good qualities and I have got no doubt in his honesty. I am confident that he will tolerate my strong words.

Every conditioned soul in this world has got defects as well as good qualities.

Gurudev's nectarous saying was 'Vilification or speaking ill of others is prohibited, because by that we pollute our minds. Vaiṣṇavas never do anything out of a grudge. They never like to speak against anybody to belittle them'. Whatever they do, they do it for the eternal benefit of others. Vaiṣṇavas are 'Paramhaṁsa'. As a haṁsa (swan) has got the capacity to extract milk from a mixture of milk and water; vaiṣṇavas always see the good qualities in others and

see defects in themselves. If we do not see our defects, we cannot rectify ourselves and we cannot have spiritual enhancement. When we have got any sort of obstinacy in our mind, if there be anything against it, we can become unbalanced and our real purpose of life, to worship Śrī Krishna, may get lost. We should remember the ideal characters of Śrī Prahlād Mahārāj and Śrī Ambarīṣa Mahārāj. Under all circumstances and severe oppressions, they were calm and serene.

If we see maladjustment, we shall be disturbed and we cannot concentrate on the object of worship. We forget for what purpose we have come to the Maṭh. We should adjust ourselves with the environment; we can never make the environment adjusted to us. Whatever we shall decide by our finite intellect will be wrong. 'Śaraṇāgati' is the best divine panacea of all diseases and problems.

My love to you all. May All-Merciful Śrī Guru & Gaurāṅga bless you.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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## **Do not blame others**

Praying the blessings of Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga-Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa unto the sincere souls desirous of serving Śrī Krishna and His devotees.

The Supreme Lord appears in this world in different Forms to give scope to sincere devotees to serve Him. Śrī vigraha also descends to the unconditionally completely surrendered soul. Śrīla Bhaktivinode Ṭhākura wrote in the first hymn of his 'Śaraṇāgati gīti kāvya grantha', 'Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu out of compassion for all living beings, appeared in this world with His personal

associates and His transcendental realm to bestow the highest transcendental divine love, which is very scarce. He taught the forms of śaraṇāgati which can be manifested in the hearts of those sincere souls who sincerely associate with sādhus i.e. bonafide surrendered souls.' We should go through the hymn very carefully and properly practice it sincerely.

Gītā 6.40 tells us: 'na hi kalyāṇa-kṛt kaścid durgatiṁ tāta gacchati' - One who desires eternal welfare sincerely, will never have to repent for distress. Gītā 2.47 says: 'karmaṇy evādhikāras te mā phaleṣu kadācana' - We can do bad and good deeds, but the fruits of those actions are controlled by the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna. Sunīti Devi advised her child Dhruva not to blame anybody in this world for his afflictions. We reap the fruits of our own actions, others are only instrumental. Dhruva immediately accepted the teachings of his mother and effaced from his heart all hostile mentality towards anybody in this world and with an undisturbed mind chanted the Holy Name— 'O Padmapalāshalochan Hari' from the core of his heart and the Supreme Lord was propitiated. The Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna, who is residing in the heart of every living being, is directly protecting Dhruva from all calamities. No ferocious jungle beasts could do any harm to the little child. Moreover his step mother, his father and all others started weeping profusely for him.

## **Pithy sayings of Vitrāsura**

Our Most Revered Gurudev often used to remind us to remember the pithy sayings of Vitrāsura to Devarāj Indra. The conditioned souls have the greatest defect in that what they hear they immediately forget because of their misconception of self which is the root cause of all ulterior desires. The first pithy saying of Vitrāsura is, 'Śrī Krishna does not bestow worldly property or any wealth of the three worlds to those who have got one-pointed causeless devotion to Him and whom Śrī Krishna thinks his own dear & favorite. Because worldly wealth causes malice, anxiety, mental anguish, vanity, quarrel, indulgence in vices. Moreover severe tension is involved in acquiring it and preserving the acquired'. We should also remember that Vitrāsura said to Devarāj Indra that even if a sincere devotee, out of ignorance, wants those worldly things, the Supreme Lord puts obstacles to it. That hindrance is the actual grace

of God. It is better we should go through all the pithy sayings of Vitrāsura again and again.

Another method of getting mental calm and serenity, is to at least remember the four hymns of glorification of Nṛsiṃha Bhagavān as well as the Panchatattva and Mahāmantra each at least four times while going to bed and while waking up.

May All-Merciful Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga-Rādhā-Krishna bless you. My love to all others.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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## **No time to criticize others**

Our Most Revered Gurudev occasionally warned us by saying that after the disappearance of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu and His personal associates as well as the prominent vaiṣṇava ācāryas like Narottam Thākura, Shyamānanda Prabhu and Śrīnivas Āchārya, darkness descended on the horizon of śuddha bhakti and many pseudo sects cropped up. The renowned saint Totaram Das Babaji Maharāj mentioned thirteen pseudo sects - 'āula, bāula, karttābhajā, neḍā, daraveśa, sāṇi, sahajiyā, sakhībhekī, smārta, jata-gosāṇi ativāḍī, cūḍādhārī, gaurāṅga-nāgarī, tota kahe ei tera saṅga nāhi kori'. Sincere aspirants should be careful to avoid association of the pseudo sects. Each of the pseudo sects try to establish that they

are preaching Chaitanya Mahāprabhu's teachings, but actually they are defaming, disrespecting and tarnishing the teachings of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu.

A novice or beginner may be cheated, so our guruvarga refuted their contentions with strong words so that sincere souls are not misled and deprived of getting actual spiritual devotional benefit. But at the same time, they gave a warning to us: don't attack out of personal grudge the persons who are preaching pseudo sects. We are not to attack any person in this world as he is from Krishna, by Krishna and in Krishna. Sādhus have got no personal grudge to anybody in this world, but for the eternal benefit of all, they refute the anti-devotional contentions only to save the sincere souls from being misled. If we attack those proponents with hostile mentality, their bad qualities will come to us and we will have a spiritual fall. Even if those proponents come to the sādhus, sādhus pay respect to them and serve them with prasād because they have got no personal grudge against these people. If they sincerely want to hear pure devotional conclusive thoughts, sādhus speak to them mildly, establish devotional thoughts and show defects of anti- devotional thoughts.

But they remain silent when they find the person has come not to hear sincerely, but to show pedantic fits. Śuddha bhaktas do not like idle talks. They have no desire to speak unnecessarily because they want to engage themselves fully for the service of God and His devotees. They know that at any moment they may leave this most perishable world. They are completely disinterested in non-eternal worldly affairs. Real aspirants utilise their time for their actual benefit - they find no time to find faults and criticise others.

The vaiṣṇava is paramahansa. As a swan can extract milk from a mixture of water and milk, vaiṣṇavas see the good qualities in human beings. Human beings have both good and bad qualities in them. When good qualities predominate he is called good and when bad qualities predominate he is called a bad person. Emancipated realised souls have only good qualities. They are the rarest in this world. The vaiṣṇava has the capacity to see good qualities in all human beings.

They have got no propensity to see bad qualities in others, but they see bad qualities in themselves. When a votary sees his own bad qualities, he can rectify himself. The vaiṣṇava has got no vanity or pride. They give respect to all but do not aspire for respect from others.

The root cause of suffering is false ego and false interests. The material world is finite, so if anybody gets some property, others are deprived of it. When human beings are taught that they are the physical body, they all try to get the requirements of the body and engage in competition against one another. Actually the real self is neither the physical body nor subtle material body. Being enveloped by material energy they wrongly misconceive. So Indian ṛṣis first tried for material property and afterwards they found it only leads to extreme suffering. Actually the requirement is Complete Bliss, Who is God - pūrṇa-sukh - Absolute Bliss or Infinite Bliss. Infinite Saccidānanda is Infinite Bliss. If the attention of human beings is diverted towards Infinite bliss and if anybody gets Absolute Bliss, others will not be deprived of it. According to differential calculus mathematics, infinity minus infinity is infinity. Infinite jīvas can get infinite bliss. There is no possibility of clashing. When one will lose interest for material acquisitions he will become indifferent to it. Then no clashing with others will occur.

## **Ātmā requires ātmā**

As long as we shall remain in this world, we should be satisfied with minimum material possessions. Ātmā requires ātmā for its sustenance, not anātmā. Anātmā is foreign to it. If one gets the property of one world, he will have the desire to get another. The material world is actually devoid of actual bliss. The material world is the shadow of the Supreme Lord, Who is All-Existence All-Knowledge and All- Bliss. The material world is the outcome of Māya which means - 'not that'. The shadow of a tree has got no actual existence.

*tasmād idaṁ jagad aśeṣam asat-svarūpaṁ svapnābham asta-dhiṣaṇaṁ puru-  
duḥkha-duḥkham tvayy eva nitya-sukha-bodha-tanāv anante māyāta udyad api  
yat sad ivāvabhāti*

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 10.14.22)

This entire universe is non-eternal, so it is dream-like (illusory), transitory (not permanent), devoid of knowledge, inert and extremely painful. But O Lord Krishna! You are All-Existence All-Knowledge and All-Bliss and therefore Infinite. The entire universe has been created and destroyed by your inconceivable power, yet it appears to be truth actually existing.

The Supreme Lord is Supreme in all aspects. He is Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent and He is All-Bliss. By the grace of Absolute Bliss we can get complete bliss. Grace descends to a surrendered soul. All desires of the votary will be fulfilled if he takes unconditional total submission to the Supreme Lord. Śrīla Bhaktivinode Ṭhākura has written -

*mānasa, deha, geha, yo kichu mora, arpiluṁ tuyā pade nanda-kiśora! ampade  
vipade, jīvane-maraṇe, dāy mama gelā, tuwā o-pada baraṇe mārobi rākhobiōjo  
icchā tohārā, nitya-dāsa prati tuwā adhikārā*

O Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna! You can kill me or protect me. You can do whatever you want. You have got every right over your eternal servant.

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**Tolerating rebuke and censure of seniors**

I have heard from guruvarga that person is fortunate and blessed, who is rebuked and censured by others, especially by senior superior persons, because that will destroy all his sins without penance. But the condition is this - the person should have the capacity to tolerate censure.

On the contrary, the person who is always respected and praised by others, is most unfortunate, because he has got no scope to get deliverance from the ill-consequence of sins which he has committed. The conditioned souls of the world are always very keen to get respect and praise from others, because of which, they are enslaved — enveloped by the illusory energy of the Supreme Lord.

As you are censured by a senior vaiṣṇava, I don't find any cause of your being disappointed and worried. Sādhus do not become worried if they are oppressed by others; they become worried if they, by mistake, inflict any kind of harm to any person as counter protest. We should always remember the instruction of Sunīti Devi and Śrī Nārada Goswāmī to Dhruva, if we want to get the highest objective, Krishna-prem, "Don't blame others for your distress. Jīvas suffer the same afflictions which they inflicted upon others." Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu has taught us how to worship Śrī Krishna in the third verse of Śikṣāṣṭakam. These instructions are not merely for giving advice to others, but we are to practise it in our life.

As you are confident that you have not done wrong to anybody, there is no cause of your being disturbed. We have got hold over our actions, but not over the fruits of the actions. Fruits are controlled by the Supreme Lord, Who is all good and Who is equal to all.

The greatest hurdle to Krishna bhakti is committal of offence at the lotus feet of vaiṣṇavas. We should not neglect paying respects to superior vaiṣṇavas. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu never tolerated disrespect to senior vaiṣṇavas. So, it will



be unwise to sacrifice eternal benefit for the sake of mundane temporary benefits.

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## **Paying respect to senior Vaiṣṇavas**

When our guruvarga used to meet and discuss among themselves, we, as disciples, did not enter into their conversation. We only entered when they ordered us to meet them, because, as a neophyte, we may sometimes misunderstand their behaviour and their way of talking and discussion. Always we should understand we are disciples and they are our objects of reverence as śikṣā gurus. It is still in my mind when our śikṣā guru Parampujyapad Śrīmad Bhakti Vedanta Swāmī Mahārāj was talking with our gurumahārāj in the room, I did not enter into that room. After their discussions, when Swāmī Mahārāj came out from the room and was returning to his place from our Maṭh at Vrindāvan, I had a talk with him at the gate. We should be very careful in our behaviour with śikṣā gurus and also with senior vaiṣṇavas and sannyāsīs. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu has taught us in the third verse of Śikṣāṣṭakam that we should pay respect to all human beings thinking that our object of worship the Supreme Lord is residing in their heart. So, it goes without saying that we should pay respect to all vaiṣṇavas, especially to superior senior vaiṣṇavas, if we want to do Harinām without offences’.

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**Question to Śrīla Gurudev** - *I would like to know from you how the vaiṣṇavas could come to a better relationship between each other up to the point of even helping each other. With our website we try to promote this type of consciousness and for that we need the blessings of all the acharyas.*

## Vaiṣṇava relationship

Vaiṣṇavas are mutually always in the best relationship, otherwise they cannot be vaiṣṇavas. The only target of vaiṣṇavas is to satisfy Viṣṇu. By serving Viṣṇu, they give contentment to Viṣṇu and contentment to all. Prahlād Mahārāj said to his father Hiranyakaśipu, Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 7.8.9 - 'My dear father! Please give up your demoniac mentality. Do not discriminate in your heart between enemies and friends; make your mind equipoised towards everyone. Except for the uncontrolled and misguided mind, there is no enemy within this world. When one sees everyone on the platform of equality, one then comes to the position of worshipping the Lord perfectly.' (Translation by Most Revered Śrīmad Bhakti Vedanta Swāmī Mahārāj)

The last message of Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Goswāmī Ṭhākura to all ascetic and household devotees was 'All of you should remain in close co-operation with the objective to propitiate the Supreme Lord (Absolute Undivided Knowledge) with wholehearted allegiance to the Grace Incarnate form gurudev (āśraya-vigraha), the Absolute Counterpart of the Supreme Lord. All of you, with the only object of satisfying the Supreme Lord, somehow maintain your livelihood in this most perishable non- eternal world. Don't give up worship of God in spite of hundreds of troubles, hundreds of humiliations and hundreds of abuse. Don't be discouraged by seeing that most of the conditioned souls in this world are not accepting the service of Śrī Krishna sincerely, without deceitfulness. Never give up your own worship, never give up your only wealth, the –'be-all and end-all' of your life - hearing and chanting of the glories of Śrī Krishna.

Always do Harikīrtan with the qualities of being humbler than a blade of grass and more forbearing than a tree.' The root cause of all troubles and sufferings is aversion to Śrī Krishna. Problems in this world of disunion etc. cannot be removed by retaining the nescience.

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**Question to Śrīla Gurudev** - *If someone has taken sannyās but is not holding the vows, are we still supposed to give our visible praṇāms?*

**Avoid association when not sure of character**

*api cet su-durācāro bhajate mām ananya-bhāḥ sādhuḥ eva sa mantavyaḥ  
samyag vyavasito hi saḥ*

(Bhagavad Gītā 9.30)

"Even if one commits the most abominable action, if he is engaged in devotional service he is to be considered saintly because he is properly situated in his determination."

Whether one is engaged in devotional service or not as mentioned above, we will know from his characteristics. If the person is sincere in devotion, he will have repentance in his heart for his misdeeds. However, if such repentance is not present and such wrong behaviour has become his nature then it is a different case. It is sometimes difficult to know about his heart's feelings. If we are not sure, then it is advised, *durācār vaiṣṇava vandaya na tu sanga yogya*. He is still to be given due respect but his association should be avoided.

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**Question to Śrīla Gurudev** - *I and my wife have been associating with many devotees of various gurus of different Gauḍīya Maṭhs and we find it very enlivening. There are sometimes incompatibilities between the groups but I offer my sincere respects to all of these vaiṣṇava acharyas whom I view to be śuddha bhaktas. But I am particularly attracted to you.*

## **Ulterior desire leads to incompatibilities**

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu preached the All-Embracing and All-Accommodating Gospel of Divine Love, i.e. Love for the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna and all in relation to Śrī Krishna. How can the sincere devotees who preach this All- Embracing Gospel of Divine Love have incompatibilities amongst them? A real sādhu sees adjustment in all circumstances, even in contrary circumstances. Actually when we miss the target, everything becomes chaos. The target should be pure causeless devotion to Śrī Krishna for His satisfaction only. There should not be any ulterior desire in the mind. Actually realised sincere souls are very scarce in this world. The novice, who has started bhajan, can attain this elevated state gradually, of course, by the grace of Guru, Vaiṣṇava and Bhagavān. I am encouraged to know that the devotees of different Maṭhs or institutions gather together and are doing bhajan united. This is good for them and also for the eternal benefit of others, who will be encouraged to see this ideal. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu has emphatically declared in His writing the four qualities required for devotees to do Harinām he should be humbler than a blade of grass, more tolerant than a tree, should give respect to all and should not desire to get respect from others. We will not get the actual benefit if we only memorise these but do not practice. Example is better than precept.

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**Question to Śrīla Gurudev** - *We are a group of disciples of different ācharyas. Some devotees complain about saying that he does not follow vaiṣṇava*

*siddhānta of Gauḍīya vaiṣṇavas. We would like to know your opinion in this regard and your good advice how we (as his disciples) should behave with these persons.*

## **Conditioned soul has drawbacks**

I am glad to learn that all the devotees get together to engage themselves in the service of guru, vaiṣṇavas and Bhagavān. This material universe is the prison house of the culprits. Here most of the living beings, almost all, are prisoners. As they are averse to Śrī Krishna, they have got this punishment. Actually they are eternal servants of the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna, but due to aversion to Śrī Krishna caused by misuse of their relative independence, they become entangled in the trap of the external deluding potency of Supreme Lord. They have forgotten their relation with Śrī Krishna and want to enjoy this world. Owing to this offence, they passed through cycles of births and deaths and after 8 millions of births in different species they have got this precious human birth. God is satisfied by creating human beings, as they have got the discriminating power between good and bad, eternal and non- eternal. They have got the capacity to worship God, Who is All-Existence All-Knowledge and All-Bliss. This human birth is not meant for eating, sleeping, defending and mating like beasts and birds. But the fact is, as they passed through different species, they enjoyed material pleasures and also suffered tremendous afflictions while getting innumerable births and deaths. Every conditioned soul has the drawback of the influence of bad impressions imbibed through previous innumerable births. But the Lord has given them the capacity to understand the distinction between good and bad so human birth is eligible for worshipping God. When seeing the drawbacks in the conditioned souls, we should not be disheartened. Waves of bad impressions and good impressions exist in the minds of the conditioned souls. Only the fortunate votary tries to suppress the evil impressions and enhance good impressions. This sort of endeavor of the votary will enable them to get the highest objective. Śrī Krishna has said in the Gītā, 'A sincere soul will never be deceived'. Also He said—

*api cet su-durācāro bhajate mām ananya-bhāḥ sādhuḥ eva sa mantavyaḥ  
samyag vyavasito hi saḥ*

*kṣipraṁ bhavati dharmātmā śaśvac-chāntiṁ nigacchati kaunteya pratijānīhi na  
me bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati*

(Bhagavad Gītā 9.30-31)

Even a conditioned soul, who has taken the vow of worshipping Krishna with one-pointed devotion, may commit a very abominable sin due to the impact of his previous bad impressions. But in spite of that, he should not be considered 'asādhu' (Non-sādhu). Of course, he must not give up his exclusive devotion to Śrī Krishna and should continue worshipping Him. He will ultimately become a virtuous devotee and will get eternal peace.' Krishna asked Arjuna to declare solemnly that His devotee with one-pointed devotion to Him will never have a spiritual fall.

All conditioned souls of the world have got good and bad qualities. When bad qualities predominate, his nomenclature is 'bad person' and when good qualities predominate, his nomenclature is 'good person'. No conditioned soul can be without demerits. Only realised souls are perfect, but they are very rare. It is the instruction of our guruvarṅga that if you are serious about progressing in spiritual or devotional worship, don't see defects in other persons, see their qualities. The votary should see his own defects. Then he can rectify himself and there will be no fear of committing offence to any devotee. A haṁsa (swan) has the capacity to take out the milk from the mixture of milk and water. Vaiṣṇavas have got such qualification and for that they are regarded as 'Paramhaṁsa'. We should carefully go through the divine last message of Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Goswāmī Ṭhākura to all ascetic and household devotees.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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**Question to Śrīla Gurudev** - (1) *As devotees our goal is to have one-pointed devotion to Śrī Krishna and Śrīmatī Rādhika and to develop the internal moods of Śrī Vrindāvan dhām. With this in mind why do devotees place a lot of significance on the chanting of prayers to Śrī Nrisimhadeva as part of our sādhana? It seems that the two moods of worship are contradictory. One in opulence and one in mādhyura, so if we are trying to enter the realm of sweetness, why is prominence often placed on the other aspect?* (2) *Also I have another enquiry regarding vaiṣṇava etiquette. I often feel that I have love for Śrīla Bhaktivedanta Swāmi Prabhupāda and say that I have, but I find that I have no love for many of his disciples who very proudly condemn my Gurudev and the Gauḍīya Maṭh. How can I learn to love somebody who causes offense to my spiritual master?*

## **Surrender to Guru**

I am in receipt of your letter dated \_\_\_\_\_. You have wanted in your letter clarification of your doubts. It is impossible for conditioned souls to remove their doubts by their efforts, especially regarding transcendental spiritual matters. The significance of the teachings of the bona fide guru, vaiṣṇava and Bhagavān can only be understood by unconditional complete surrender to Them. The sermons of Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Goswāmī Ṭhākura have been preserved and printed as a collection of speeches in the books 'Vaktritāvali' (four volumes). In the fourth volume, 'To be entitled to hear mantra', he invoked the following verse of Svetasvatāra Upaniṣad for Vyāsa Pūjā:

*yasya deve parā bhaktir yathā deve tathā gurau, tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ  
prakāśante mahātmanah*

Only to one who has got sincere devotion to the Supreme Lord Bhagavān and the same devotion to a bona fide guru, the implication of the Vedas will be revealed.

Of course it is also true, if you want quality, you cannot get quantity and if you have the desire to increase the number, you are to sacrifice quality. Mahādeva has said to Pārvati Devi—

*guravo bahavaḥ śanti śiṣyavittāpahārakāḥ durlabhaḥ sadgururdevi,  
śiṣyasantāpahāraḥ*

There may be many so called gurus in this world to squeeze money from disciples, but a bona fide guru, who can remove the drawbacks and sufferings of disciples, is very rare.

## **Special Kaliyuga**

Qualitatively, a bona fide guru and a bona fide votary are rarely to be found. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu has advised us to perform one-pointed exclusive causeless devotion to Śrī Krishna. You will find evidence in the fourth verse of Śikṣāṣṭaka written by Him. The Highest Sweet Form of the Supreme Lord - Nandanandan Śrī Krishna, appears in this universe only once in one day of Brahmā. Finite human beings cannot calculate the span of life of a day of Brahmā. The span of life of fourteen Manus is equal to one day of Brahmā. Nandanandan Krishna has appeared in the 28th chaturyuga of Vaivasvata Manvantara (7th Manvantara) in the Dvāpara Yuga. Nandanandan Krishna only performs sweet pastimes with His own personal associates in the above mentioned special Dvāpara Yuga. But just after that Dvāpara Yuga, in the same Manvantara, in the next Kaliyuga, by taking the complexion and mood of worship of Rādhārāṇī, Nandanandan Krishna appears as Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu to distribute the highest Krishna-prem to all, irrespective of caste, creed and



religion, even to beasts and birds, without consideration. So, He is the Most Munificent Form of Godhead. You are to go through the verse of Vidagdha-Mādhav written by Śrīla Rūpā Goswāmī:-

*anarpita-carīm cirāt karuṇayāvatīrṇaḥ kalau samarpayitum unnatojjvala-rasām  
sva-bhakti-śriyam hariḥ puraṭa-sundara-dyuti-kadamba-sandīpitaḥ sadā  
hṛdaya-kandare sphuratu vaḥ śacī-nandanah*

## **Aversion to Krishna got us material relations**

Here the words 'anarpita-carīm cirāt' mean that the highest Krishna-prem was not given for a long period. We are very fortunate that we have taken birth in this very Kaliyuga and close to the appearance time of Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu. All sweet delightful relations are manifested only in Nandanandan Śrī Krishna. Actual relations of master and servant, bosom friendship, parental affection, consortherhood of love, all kinds of delightful relations exist only with Him. By misuse of relative independence, when the conditioned souls become averse to Śrī Krishna, they come in contact with the material universe or planets and are attracted by the apparent dazzling beauty of the creation created by the Lord's external potency, jump into this world for enjoyment and get entangled in non-eternal undesirable material relations. As long as they have misidentification of the self, i.e., they think that they are material bodies, there is every possibility of the tendency to enjoy this world. This world is the perverted reflection of the Transcendental Highest Spiritual Realm Vrindāvan dhām. That sweet relation, which is the highest in Vrindāvan dhām, is the lowest in this material world. There is apprehension that in the name of gopi-prem, we may indulge in non-eternal man and woman relation. For that reason, realised vaiṣṇava ācāryas have warned us. Śrīla Rūpā Goswāmī has written about Rādhā-prem in the last verse of his book 'Upadeśāmṛta', but we should carefully note from where he started. In the first two verses 'vāco vegam...' and 'atyāhāraḥ prayāsaś ca...' he has warned us strongly. We should also go through the commentaries of Śrīla Bhaktivinode Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Goswāmī Ṭhākura. If we do not understand the gradual procedure, the result will be reverse. It is very

difficult to write about all points. Direct contact is necessary.

The obstacles to pure devotion for a neophyte aspirant are attraction for money, sex connection and name and fame. If anybody has such attraction, he cannot get śuddha-bhakti, what to speak of Prem-bhakti of Vrindāvan. So Śrī Krishna has appeared as Narasimhadeva to rescue the conditioned souls from such attractions. Narasimhadeva has killed Hiraṇyakaśipu. 'Hiraṇya' means gold or money. 'Kaśipu' means 'Bed' signifying sex enjoyment and along with that is also desire for name and fame. Narasimhadeva will kill this demon existing in our hearts. Of course, Prahlād is also existing in our hearts. So, Narasimhadeva not only removes obstacles, but also gives pure devotion.

The Supreme Lord is one. He cannot be more than one. He is Infinite and Absolute. If we think anything can be outside the Absolute, then the Absolute will lose His position. So, ontologically God is one. But He has got infinite manifestations. His everything is infinite - infinite creations, infinite created worlds, infinite transcendental realms etc. As per the degree of submission of the aspirant, the Lord's transcendental qualities will descend to him. But that is not the end. Nobody can finish realisation of the Supreme Lord. It will go on ad infinitum.

## **Sādhū's mind cannot be diverted**

Chaitanya Mahāprabhu in His third verse of Śikṣāṣṭakam has taught us that to perform Harinām without tenfold offences, we should have these four qualities: we should be humbler than a blade of grass, more forbearing than a tree, should not have the desire of getting name and fame from others and should give respect to all in the consideration that our object of love Śrī Krishna is existing in the heart of every living being. It is good for sincere aspirants to rectify themselves by condemning or subduing their own evil deeds and thoughts. Only then, by their own ideal character, can they warn others in regard to these. A

bona fide sādhu cannot have any kind of hostile mentality to anybody or any living being in this world. He may condemn the evil practices or doings but he has got no enmity to the persons who are doing such sinful acts. So sādhus are always calm and serene. Nobody in this world can divert his mind from his concentrated devotion to Lord.

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu has taught us by His own life. Although He knew that Ramchandra Puri committed offence to Mādhavendra Puri, He did not go to discipline Ramchandra Puri because he was a godbrother of His gurudev Isvara Puri. We commit a Himalayan blunder when we become hostile to anybody in this world by seeing his bad practices and bad actions. We have got no grudge over any person but we do not support the evil practices. We should condemn those practices. You will find example of this in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam. Dhruva, in his childhood, accepted the teachings of his mother and Nārada completely and effaced from his heart all hostile mentalities against his stepmother, revered father or anybody in this world. Without hostile mentality to anybody, when he called Nārāyaṇa, he got His grace.

Nārāyaṇa appeared in the forest as Nārada.

We are so so. Hope this will find you all in good health and spirit. My love to you all.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

## **Hate the sin, not sinner**

N.B.: After the disappearance of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu and His personal associates and subsequently Narottam Ṭhākura, Śyāmānand Prabhu and Śrīnivas Āchārya, darkness descended on the horizon of the Gauḍīya sampradāya and many pseudo sects cropped up in the name of real propagation of Chaitanya Mahāprabhu's message of Divine Love. By discerning the abominable activities of those pseudo sects, the learned and respectable residents of Bengal lost their

faith in the teachings of Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. Totarām Das Babaji, one of the prominent saints of Navadvīp, mentioned the names of those pseudo sects—'āula, bāula, karttābhajā, neḍā, daraveśa, sāñi, sahajiyā, sakhibhekī, smārta, jata-gosāñi, ativādī, cūḍādhārī, gaurāṅga-nāgarī, tota kahe ei tāra saṅga nāhi kori'. Although all authentic scriptures - the Bhāgavatam, the Vedas, the Upanishads, Chaitanya Charitāmṛta, Chaitanya Bhāgavat and other writings of the powerful sad-goswāmīs are existing, nobody could understand their actual implication. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, on seeing the despicable condition of the conditioned souls, out of compassion sent His own personal associates Śrīla Bhaktivinode Ṭhākura (Kamal Manjari) and Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Goswāmī Ṭhākura (Nayanmani Manjari) to the world, who wrote hundreds of books in different languages refuting all anti-devotional conclusive thoughts and evil practices in the name of Chaitanya Mahāprabhu's pure Divine Love. Many so-called devotees started strong vehement vilification of the persons who preached Chaitanya Mahāprabhu's teachings wrongly. But then, all the defects and abominable nature of those pseudo sects rebounded and made these so-called devotees, who vilified the proponents of the above pseudo sects, even more condemnable and abominable. Our Most Revered Gurudev Nitya-līlā-pravistha Om Viṣṇupad Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Dayita Mādhav Goswāmī Mahārāj occasionally used to caution us against disparaging the persons of the pseudo sects but to be careful of our own eternal welfare, saying we should remain aloof from such evil company and should also condemn the evil practices, but without any personal grudge to anybody. We commit a gross mistake when we reprimand those proponents, persons of anti-devotional ideologies, because in reaction there is fear of our being contaminated with those evil thoughts. We should censure the anti-devotional thoughts or practices but not the persons. Any kind of hatred to any person will be an obstacle to our spiritual amelioration. That we should not do under any circumstance. The conditioned souls, worldly people, behave like this and quarrel amongst themselves. But a realised sincere sādhu never does this.

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## **Life in the Maṭh**

When inmates of the Maṭh have the aptitude for staying independently by the use of their relative independence, it will become difficult for them to stay with devotional restrictions and submission to vaiṣṇavas. It is sure that they cannot get actual bliss and eternal benefit by staying independently. At least if we can somehow stay within the precincts of the Maṭhs established by His Divine Grace Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, knowingly or unknowingly our energy will be devoted for the service of the Presiding Deities installed by Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. Our life may be a bit successful. But if we stay outside, our life may be totally baffled. If we can serve the presiding Deities of His Divine Grace Śrīla Guru Mahārāj with steadfast devotion, our life will be fully successful. His Divine Grace Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, the personal associate of Śrī Krishna Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, has manifested his dearest object of worship before us to give scope to us to serve Them.

The Maṭh-rakshaka (temple-president) should be tolerant; otherwise he cannot keep sevakas who are voluntary servitors. We should be sympathetic to all Maṭh-sevakas and try to retain them. It is very bad and anti-devotional to speak ill of one to another. There may be frailties and drawbacks in sādhakas. We should, as true friends, try to rectify them with sympathy. Can anybody say with assertion that he is completely defectless? If we take out hairs from the blanket, it will be finished.

Behaviour cannot be imposed upon persons. It should come from within. Inmates of the Maṭh are voluntary servitors. They serve for their devotional progress. Service by paid persons is not actual service; it is a kind of profession. Combined publication of magazines is a good method to bring relation of hearts amongst member- organisations.

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## Highest teachings of Śrīla Bhaktivinode Ṭhākura

May All Merciful Śrī Guru, Gaurāṅga Rādhā Krishna bless you.

I am very glad to see your tremendous respect to our Most Revered Gurudev Nitya- līlā-praviṣṭa Om Viṣṇupad 108 Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Dayita Mādhav Goswāmī Mahārāj. Our Most Revered Gurudev clearly said to all His disciples by His forcible teaching – ,You are not to do anything except, and only except propagating the teachings of Śrīla Bhaktivinode Ṭhākura in different languages of the world.’ Actually, the daily teachings of Krishna bhakti are by Śrīla Bhaktivinode Ṭhākura.

Śrīla Most Revered Gurudev, by seeing my non-belief of the transcendental poems by Śrīla Bhaktivinode Ṭhākura – Śaraṇāgati, Kalyāṇa-kalpataru Gītāvalī, Gīta-mālā, ordered me to go through the teachings of Kalyāṇa-kalpataru. I went through that. After half an hour, my heart had been choked. After that my mind had changed.

So it is my desire, don't be disheartened, go through the extra-ordinary prayers.

### Śaraṇāgati prayers

1. śrī-krishna-chaitanya prabhu dayā kara more
2. bhuliyā tomāre saṁsāre āsiyā
3. mānasa, deha, geḥa, jo kichu mora
4. ātma-nivedana tuyāpaḍekori
5. sarvasva tomār, caraṇe saṁpiyā,
6. tumi sarveśvareśvara, brajendra-nandan

7. rādhā-kunḍa-taṭa-kuñja-kuṭīra
8. hari he! prapañce poḍiyā, agati hoiyā,

### **Kalyāṇa-kalpataru prayers**

1. ore manā, bhālo nāhi lāge e saṁsāra
2. durlabha mānava-janma labhiyā saṁsāre
3. jīvana-samāpt-kāle koribo bhajana,
4. amī to durjana ati sadādurācāra
5. bhavārṇave pa'de mor ākula parān
6. āmār samān hina nāhi e saṁsāre
7. śuno, he raśika jāna, krishna-guṇā agaṇana,

Go through these transcendental poems in detail. You will be rescued from worldly attachments.

My love to you all.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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**Question to Śrīla Gurudev** - *At this moment my whole material and spiritual life is messed up. I feel I need to make some adjustments in my life. I do not know how to do it, because I am afraid that I will make things only worse. Please advise me how to continue with my sādhana in a more balanced way. Can You advise whether to come to India or not this time?*

## **Take shelter of guru**

In Padma Purāṇa it is mentioned –

*guravo bahavaḥ santi śiṣya-vittapaharakah durlabhah sad- gurum devi śiṣya-santā-pahārakāḥ*

O Devi, there are many gurus who are expert in plundering the wealth of their disciples, but it is very rare to find a bona fide guru, who can remove the miseries of his disciples. Getting a bona fide guru is not so easy. It is very difficult. A guru who desires worldly opulence is not an actual guru. You should realize the position of a guru. Actually, I am not a guru. Our gurudev is actual guru. I told them (aspirants, votaries) to accept His shelter; not to accept my shelter. Because it is my Gurudev's order, I have to instruct everyone to take His shelter. If you take shelter to Him and surrender to Him, then everything will come automatically. We should surrender to a pure devotee. Then those transcendental feelings will descend to us. Without the mercy of devotees it cannot happen. It cannot be attained from non-devotees.

This world is filled with non-devotees. They see only material things. We are surrounded by worldly people. We see them and desire worldly benefits. If we do not get worldly benefit then we become disturbed. Internally we want worldly benefit; we do not want Him (Śrī Krishna), actually. If anybody wants Him, then he will not give any kind of blame to anybody. Never. He thinks, 'I am the cause



of my difficulties. Nobody else is the cause.' Dhruva had been taught, 'You should not have any kind of hostile mentality to anybody in this world. If you have such hostile mentality, you will not get Supreme Lord.' And immediately he finished (effaced) everything from his heart and chanted (the Lord's name). We should not blame others.

You can come to India. If Lord wishes you will get sādhu-sanga. Sādhu-sanga cannot be attained everywhere. It is not so easy. But when one will become fit, he will have the tendency to come and he will have an opportunity to get such company of sādhus. Now we are surrounded by worldly things totally. So we are not giving our whole-hearted attention or whole-hearted mentality to Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna. We are giving our mind to worldly things. So those things will come. They will be prominent. And that will disturb you. Actually it is very difficult to get a real devotee in this world. Very difficult. When Nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa Om Viṣṇupad 108 Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura Prabhupād was present, those who came in His touch immediately accepted. After His disappearance they found that they had become powerless. How? Previously they were going everywhere without fear. When they were in contact with Him they were fearless but after He disappeared they felt powerless. They experienced this. But those who want to get the actual benefit, they will try to do bhajan inspite of that.

## **Human birth is rare**

We have got His teaching. He had instructed,

*labdhvā sudurlabham idaṁ bahu-sambhavānte mānuṣyam arthadam anityam  
apīha dhīraḥ tūrṇaṁ yateta na pated anumṛtyu yāvan niḥśreyasāya viṣayaḥ  
khalu sarvataḥ syāt*

(Śrīmad Bhagavatam 11.9.29)

'After innumerable births, we have been born as human beings. Therefore, this human birth is very rare. Although it is impermanent, it bestows the highest benefit of serving Supreme Lord and to get the highest object permanently. It is the actual duty of all human beings to try utmost to achieve the highest welfare. Therefore a person who has got the actual knowledge will endeavor for highest eternal welfare before another death occurs because in all other births we can get connection with non-eternal worldly objects, which cause intense suffering. But the actual eternal welfare is not possible in other births.'

Śrīla Prabhupād had commented on this verse for one month. He instructed to all those who went to Him, asked them to stay there itself and stopped them from going home. They stayed there only. Can we do? It is not so easy.

You should submit your prayers to Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna and Śrīmatī Rādhā Rani – Śrī Rādhā krishna, ,You kindly rescue me.' Then you will be rescued. He will rescue anybody if prayed from the heart. Perform pūjā, pray to Śrī Rādhā krishna. By your own efforts you will not get. When the impetus to serve Supreme Lord will come to you, you will be sent to a person where you will get more impetus. Without your wanting how He (Lord) will come? Actually we want worldly things. We may show from outside but from inside there is no feeling. It is difficult for them (may be referring to devotees outside India) because they will not find actual devotee. In this world all are surrounded by material people.

Śrīla Bhaktivinode Ṭhākur has said that the devotion we perform will never be lost. Those who desire from inside will get Supreme Lord for sure. After the disappearance of Mahāprabhu many apa-sampradāyas (non-bona fide paths) have cropped up but now it will not happen again. He said that. So you have to take this opportunity.

You should meditate on the following bhajan by Sachidāndanda Śrīla Bhaktivinode Ṭhākur:

*jibana-samapti-kale koribo bhajana, ebe kori grha-sukha'*

*kakhan e katha nahi bole vijna-jana, e deha patanonmukha*

Those who have got the actual spiritual knowledge will never say, 'At the end of my life I shall perform bhajan, but now I want to have mundane worldly pleasures' because they know that this body is perishable any moment.

*aji va sateka varse avasya marana, niscinta na thako bhai*

*yata sighra para, bhajo sri-krishna-charana jivaner thik nai*

Death certainly must come - either today or in about hundred years, so do not remain in unworried state. Begin worshiping the lotus feet of Krishna as early as possible, because it is not certain when we will get human birth again. We may become bird, beast or anything. Whatever we think at the time of death, we'll become that. We should not waste this human life like birds and beasts. Only a human being can have the knowledge about eternal and non-eternal and can perform bhajan. If there is no knowledge how can we perform bhajan? Nobody can say for sure that we'll get this opportunity again. You have to consider it's value.

*samsar nirvana kori' ja'bo ami vrindavana rina-troy sodhibare koritechi  
suyatana*

'I shall settle (take care of) my worldly life and later I shall go to Vrindāvana. To purify myself of the three debts (debt to parents, debt to sages, debt to other human beings) I shall endeavor very hard now'.

*e asay nahi prayojana emon durasa vase, ya'be prana avasese, na hoibe dina-*

*bandhu charana-sevana*

Such hopes are useless. By the influence of such undesirable longings or desires, your life will depart in the end without serving the lotus feet of dīna-bandhu, the dear most Friend of the fallen.

*yadi sumangala chao, sada krishna-nama gao, grihe thako, vane thako, ithe tarka akarana*

If you want the supreme eternal welfare, then just chant the Holy name of Śrī Krishna always whether you live in the house or in the forest. All other arguments are simply useless.

Inspite of all your difficulties, I have got the hope that I'll get your company for our spiritual benefit.

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**Sincerely submit to the Lord**

Praying for blessings of Śrī Guru-Gauranga and Śrī Rādhā-Krishna unto the sincere souls desirous of serving Śrī Krishna and His devotees.

Received your letter dated when I was at Śrī Māyāpur, Ishodyan during Śrī Navadvīp dhām parikrama. Also I received one affectionate letter from your mother in Bengali. I wrote in my letter to her briefly about all my circumstances including serious health condition in the month of August in the year 2006. By Śrī Krishna's desire, I got back my life.

Birth, duration of life in this world, and death are controlled by the Supreme Lord. Submission to the will of the Lord is the only way of getting bliss. Conditioned souls have got numerous desires and when their desires are not fulfilled, they become unbalanced. By going through your letter, I was reminded of the pithy saying of our Most Revered Gurudev Nitya-līlā-pravishtha Śrīmad Bhakti Dayita Mādhav Goswāmī Mahārāj when I met Him in Calcutta, Hazra Road, Gauḍīya Maṭh. By the grace of the All-Merciful Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, I came in contact with the Grace-Incarnate Form of Krishna - Gurudev - at Goalpara, Assam at my birth-place. Here I do not want to go in detail about my questions and correspondence with Him. I decided to renounce household life and met Him in Hazra Road, Calcutta Maṭh. I told Him I have become too much indifferent to worldly relations, which are so perishable. I openly expressed my heart to gurudev, saying that although I am indifferent to worldly relations, I also have the propensity of sense-enjoyment. I asked whether it was proper for me to renounce household life in this condition. Gurudev, in reply to this question, said no conditioned souls of this world could definitely say that they are completely detached from worldly desires. They should sincerely submit to the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna, Who can rescue them from the clutches of Māyā (the illusory energy of the Supreme Lord). Gurudev expressed His strong desire that I should renounce the house and join the institution. After that I decided to join the institution, without seeking permission of the family members.

I also heard gurudev speaking in regard to this from the Gītā: Arjuna asked Krishna, cañcalaṁ hi manaḥ kṛṣṇa - ,My mind is too restless. It seems almost impossible for me, a conditioned soul, to control my restless mind as it is impossible to control the air- current.' Śrī Krishna in reply said, 'I admit that surely it is difficult to control the mind, but it is not impossible. You are very powerful. You can control the mind by abhyāsayoga (repeated practice) and vairāgya (detachment). There are two significant aspects of vairāgya— (1) practice of detachment to non-eternal things of this world and (2) attachment to the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna. As much attachment we shall have for Krishna, so much actual detachment to non-eternal things we can get automatically.

**No time factor in the spiritual sky**

To understand the time factor, we are to very carefully note the instruction given about it in the authentic scriptures of India. There are two kinds of sky - material sky and transcendental sky. In the material sky there exist three states of time factor – past, present and future. But in the transcendental spiritual sky there exists no past or future, only present. As long as we are in the grip of material egos, being enveloped by the illusory energy consisting of the three primal qualities, *rajaḥ*, *sattva* and *tamaḥ*, we are in the grip of material time - past, present and future (by *rajaḥ*- *guṇa* living beings are created, by *sattva-guṇa* they are sustained and by *tama-guṇa* they are destroyed).

Words uttered in the material sphere with material egos are material words which will give us contact with non-eternal things and relations causing bondage and the threefold sufferings - (1) physical and mental sufferings (2) sufferings caused by other living beings (nowadays horrifying sufferings are inflicted by the human beings themselves) and (3) natural calamities. Transcendental realised souls can utter transcendental sound which will give us contact with the Eternal Blissful Entity, the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna and His devotees. If we associate with worldly people we shall hear worldly words and our minds will be attached to non-eternal things of this world. Provided we associate with realised souls, we will be in contact with transcendental sounds with transcendental rhythm which can awaken the eternal real nature of the soul viz. eternal pure devotion to the Supreme Lord.

*sakarma phala bhuk pumān* - Human beings will reap the fruits of their own actions. It is stated in the *Gītā*, '*karmaṇy evādhikāras te, mā phaleṣu kadācana*' - every conscious living being has got relative independence (thinking, feeling and willing). By the good or bad use of relative independence, they can do good or bad acts. Fruits of the actions are controlled by the Supreme Lord. We commit a Himalayan blunder when we blame others for our own sufferings.

**Nāmakīrtan is the best**

It is written in the letter to your mother in Bengali that association of a bona fide śuddha bhakta, pure devotee, is essential - 'tato duḥsaṅgam utsrjya satsu sajjeta buddhimān, santa evāśya chindanti mano-vyāsaṅgam uktibhiḥ', Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 11.26.26. For getting actual fruit, you are to practice navada-bhakti as stated by Prahlād Mahārāj in the seventh canto of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, or the five forms of devotion as taught by Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, namely sādhu sanga (association of bona fide sādhus), nāma-kīrtan (chanting of the Holy Name), bhāgavat śravan (hearing of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam), Mathura vās (residing in Mathura Dhām) and śraddhaya śrīmūrti seva (worship of Deities with firm faith). Out of them nāmakīrtan is the best in Kaliyuga.

More when we meet. My love to you. May All-Merciful Śrī Śrī Guru Gaurāṅga Rādhā- Krishna bless you.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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## Trading devotion

His Divine Grace, Most Revered Śrīla Gurudev Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Dayita Mādhav Goswāmī Mahārāj, (Founder-President of Śrī Chaitanya Gauḍīya Maṭh, Registered Institution), on the auspicious day of the holy advent of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, 13th February, 1965, while He was on a preaching tour in North-East Assam, from Hailakandi, Kachhar, sent His instructive message to His godbrother, Śrīmad Jagamohan Das Brahmachārī, the then Math-in-charge

of Śrī Chaitanya Gauḍīya Maṭh, Calcutta and also the manager of 'Śrī Chaitanya Vāṇī', Bengali Monthly Magazine, to publish his instruction in the said magazine. Gurumahārāj wanted that His message should not be confined only to ascetic Maṭh-members, but it is also for the household devotees, subscribers of the magazine, as well as others who are eager to get enhancement in pure devotion: —

There are many categories of servitors (worshippers). Amongst them, three principal categories (1) servitors inspired by intense love, (2) servitors urged by obligation of duty and (3) servitors encouraged by selfish worldly interests.

The last category of the servitors mentioned above cannot be stated to be pure servitor because the relationship there of the served and servitor is non-eternal. Service will be stopped there if the worldly interest is not fulfilled. The relationship of the servitor with the Served - 'God' - is severed. It is somewhat like trading. Here acceptance of service is outward show and is only meant for fulfillment of mundane benefits. As the worldly interest is non-eternal, the relation between the Served and the so-called servitor is not permanent. Therefore, this sort of conditional service certainly is not the performance of service which exists in the Eternal Spiritual Realm. This last category of service is only an endeavour within the domain of karma (actions sanctioned by the Vedas).

## **Independent but dependent**

The first category of service is very pure and eternal. The second category of the service, although not inspired by pure love, but by obligation of the sense of duty and devotional rules sanctioned by the scriptures, is also eternal and stable. Service inspired by pure love and service by the obligation of the sense of duty and scriptural prescript are accepted as service. These two are 'Rāga-bhakti' and 'vaidhi- bhakti'. Service is eternal in both these two categories of servitors and



the relationship between Served and servitor is eternal.

A pure servitor is independent but that independence is subject to the fulfillment of the desires of God, i.e., inspired by love of God. Therefore, some subscribe to the view that the pure servitor is also dependent. Although a rāga-bhakta is bound by pure devotion to God (the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna), there is no lack of his independence to serve. What is understood by the word 'arbitrariness' does not exist in a pure devotee. A servitor is not a wooden doll. The servitors are spiritual entities. The freedom of the servitor is eternally admitted, but that independence is never used against the service of God—the object of service.

## **Service is delightful, not insensible**

Rasa (pure bliss) originates from the eternal, delightful, love relationship of two independent spiritual entities. That extraordinary bliss originating from the eternal, delightful, sweet relationship elates both the served and the servitor. The devotees and the devoted both are unable to bear the pangs of separation from each other. Sometimes it is perceived that separation is necessary to increase the intensity of love originating from the sweet, delightful relationship. This certainly exists in Spiritual Transcendental Pastimes. Diversity of service is perfectly observed amongst pure servitors. There is a gradual progress of the degrees of splendour of different delightful relationships—dāsyā (master-servant relationship), sākhyā (bosom-friendship relationship), vātsalyā (parental relationship) and kāntā (consorhood relationship). There is no want of intent or inclination of service in any of these modes of worship. Devotional service is perceptible and delightful and not insensible. As such, realised ācāryas give the definition of bhakti as cognition embraced with the essence of exhilarating potency.

## **No designation matches a devotee's dignity**

The status of a devotee of God or the status of a genuine servitor is even desired by eminent demigods. No less fortunate person can get the designation of being a servitor of the Supreme Lord. No designation within this Brahmāṇḍa (cosmos) can be equal to the dignified status of a devotee of the Lord. Those who have no knowledge of the Supreme Lord— Absolute Reality, Who is All-existence All-knowledge and All-bliss — cannot have the capacity to understand the dignity of a devotee. Therefore, they are nothing but worthless persons who disrespect a devotee out of ignorance and without knowledge of the Truth. Actually, they are trampling their own good fortune under their feet by considering the servitor of God as a lower status person. Servitors subdue the Served according to the degree of their service.

The Supreme Lord, the Possessor of six-fold opulences namely totality of wealth, power, fame, beauty, knowledge and renunciation, is the root cause of creation, preservation and destruction within infinite Brahmāṇḍas. But those who have conquered the Supreme Lord, Who is the cause of all causes, and subdued Him by pure love, are so great that they are beyond comprehension. The status of such pure devotees is the highest in the Brahmāṇḍa.

## **The surest and best way**

Contact with a genuine servitor will bring us close to the Supreme Lord. Service to the servitor bestows service to his object of service, the Supreme Lord, and subdues Him. For this reason, wise persons always carry out the orders of the servitors of the Supreme Lord to get their objective. A genuine sādhu associates with a bhakta and becomes his servitor. The servitor of the bhakta will certainly get bhakti and realised status.

A devotee of the Supreme Lord devises many ways to give scope of service to

the votaries who want eternal welfare, according to their eligibility. This opportunity of service will gradually make them eligible to get bhagavad-prem. Service of bhakta is the surest and best way of attaining God.

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## PART 5 Realising the Infinite

A surrendered soul cannot say that his realisation of the Supreme Lord and gurudeva is final, what to speak of conditioned souls. The realisation of God and His Personal Associates has no end; it will go on ad infinitum.

**Question to Srila Gurudev** ~ *Is it true that Krishna has eternally existing forms covering all species, not just higher order animals? Secondly, my sister is going to be coming to Kolkata in August for a few days on a trip sponsored by her work, so I wonder if it might be possible for her to come and meet you? My mother sends you her warmest and most heartfelt dandavat pranams and says to tell you that she thinks of you always.*

### All living beings are interrelated

I am also eager to know about the well-being of your wife and your daughter; whether they can be present in video conferences. Actually all living beings are interrelated through the relationship of Sri Krishna. Nobody can be detached. All are within Krishna, nothing can be outside Krishna. Even if it is said that a particle of dust is outside Krishna, He will lose His absolute position, He will become finite.

In fact, I am a conditioned soul. I have got many drawbacks. I am not omniscient and can never become omniscient.

It is the standing order of our Most Revered Gurudev to repeat what we have heard from the holy lips of Gurudev and bona fide Vaisnavas and to remember the teachings of authentic scriptures especially of Srimad Bhagavatam — the quintessence of all.

## **Humans are not god makers**

The Supreme Lord Sri Krishna gave instructions to Uddhav in reply to his question (vide Bhagavatam, 11th Canto, Chapters 7 to 9) about 24 gurus — including earth, water, fire, air, sky, moon, sun, pigeons etc. Lastly, He mentioned the human form, where He has said that (through an anchorite brahmin) — the Supreme Lord, by His external potency, illusory energy, consisting of three primeval qualities (Sattva, Rajah and Tamah) creates plants, reptiles, beasts, birds, ferocious animals, various living beings but could not get heart's contentment. Ultimately, He creates human beings and becomes completely satisfied and delighted to see that human beings are capable of worshipping Him. They have the discriminating power between good and bad, eternal and non- eternal and can realise Divinity.

Here this is to be carefully noted - amongst all created beings the human being is the best because he has the ability to worship God. Hence, descent of God shall be in such Forms so that human beings are attracted to worship. Ontologically God is one, Absolute Reality cannot be more than one, but His pastimes may be different and various. As He is omnipotent, no condition can be imposed on Him. He can appear in any Form He likes, He can even appear as an insect with all powers. If a conditioned soul by limited knowledge says “No”, then he has no knowledge of God. A human being is finite, he cannot be God-maker. There are infinite (planets), infinite transcendental realms. A finite being with limited knowledge cannot say what sorts of pastimes are going on in these realms, or what types of the Lord's personal associates and Forms of God exist there.

We are all happy to know that your sister is coming to Calcutta in the month of August on a trip sponsored by her work. Kindly inform me on what date she is coming to Calcutta and on what date and time she will come to our Math to see us. Explain to her everything clearly, about the address and location of our Math.

It is my good fortune that I have the blessing and affection of your revered mother. Convey my heart's regards to her.

Hope this will find you in good health and spirits. My love to you all.

Dandavat-Pranams.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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**Question to Srila Gurudev** - (1) *What is the form & activities of the transcendental body(siddha deha - spiritual liberated body)? Do it also go through birth, growth & death like a material body? Does it need food and sleep? Are there trees, plants, mountains, rivers in the Transcendental Realm (spiritual planets)?*

(2) *Why does the Supreme Lord Krishna play the pastime of separating from Radharani, even though He knows it will cause immense suffering to His pure and most beloved devotee?*

## **Indian devotional philosophical significance**

Indian philosophers, particularly devotional philosophers, use the word 'transcendental' (aprakrit, prakritir-atit) for objects beyond matter. Spiritual objects

are beyond the comprehension of the finite gross and subtle (mind and intelligence) sense organs of the material body. As the material body has birth and death, so the sense organs of the non-eternal body will also be non-eternal. Therefore, everything - every perception - comprehended by non-eternal sense organs is also non-eternal.

According to the English Pocket Oxford Dictionary, the significance of the word 'transcendental' is given thus:

Transcendental (a): a priori; not based on experience, intuitively accepted, innate in the mind, consisting of or dealing in or inspired by abstraction.

a priori:- From causes to effects, from general principle to particular instance; involving reasoning thus; assumed without investigation.

Abstract (a): to do with or existing in thought or theory rather than matter or practice, not concrete.

Concrete: existing in material form, real, definite, positive.

According to the above observation, 'transcendental' signifies a different meaning, not at par with Indian devotional philosophical significance. Even 'philosophy' and 'darsan- sastra' are not synonymous words. They do not express the same meaning.

According to the Oxford Dictionary 'philosophy' means: The use of reason and argument in search for truth and knowledge of reality.

In Indian thought, the reasoning and arguments of the finite mind and finite intelligence of the conditioned soul cannot determine one's cause, which is the Ultimate Reality. Infinite reality, the Absolute, cannot be manufactured in the mental or intellectual factories of finite living beings. If Reality is Reality, He is always existing. We are to find out the way how to realise the Truth or the Reality. This is called 'darsan- sastra'. Infinite Reality is self-effulgent. By their challenging mood, no-one can know this. The Unchallengeable Truth, the Supreme Lord, will reveal Himself to a completely surrendered soul.

## **Greatest of the greatest**

As the mental inclinations of most persons in the modern age are towards materialism, it is difficult for the Indian saints to make them realise the implications of Indian school of thought.

*indriyani parany ahur indri pararh manah*

*manasas tu para buddhir yo buddheh paratas tu sah*

(Bhagavad Gita 3.42)

The sense organs are finer and superior to the perceptible gross material objects, mind is finer and superior to sense organs, intelligence is finer and superior to mind, and spirit soul is finer and superior to intelligence.

*yasmāt kṣaram atīto 'ham akṣarād api cottamaḥ ato 'smi loke vede ca prathitaḥ puruṣottamaḥ*

Bhagavad Gita 15.18

“I” indicates the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna. The Supreme Lord is beyond the comprehension of the individual spirit souls. Individual spirit souls are designated as ksara because they are fallible i.e. they can deviate from their normal states. Sri Krishna is supremely superior to Paramatma and brahman(aksara), so He is renowned as 'Purushottama'. Furthermore, it is stated: brahmano hi pratisthaham amrtasyavyayasya ca in the Bhagavad Gita (14.27). He is the establishment or cause of the formless brahman. The Supreme Lord is the greatest of the greatest, minutest of the minutest, and everything in between. The Supreme Lord has five extraordinary opulences: avicintya-maha-sakti (inconceivable absolute power), brahmanda- vighraha (millions of universes are within Him), (He is the Prime cause of all avatars), hatari-sugati-daya (He can even bestow eternal welfare to the foes killed by Him), atmarama-ganakarsUy (He can attract even self-contented emancipated souls).

## **Vrindavan, not part of this world**

The transcendental Supreme Lord and all His associates, who are also transcendental, cannot be restricted and limited like material bodies. Nothing is non-eternal and non-spiritual in the transcendental spiritual realm. Thus, plants, mountains, rivers, everything is spiritual and therefore extremely blissful. There is a gulf of difference between realised souls and enslaved jivas. Nobody can enter into the transcendental realm with the help of his non-eternal physical body. All the personal associates of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu had great enthusiasm to do bhajan in Vrindavan dham, because they had direct contact with the blissful realm, trees, rivers, beaches etc. Conditioned souls, with all the defects and limitations of material bodies, cannot enter into this transcendental realm.



Vrindavan dham is completely spiritual. It descends into this world. It is not a part of the world, or India or of the state Uttar Pradesh. The Lord, with His Name, form, attributes, pastimes and realm, descends to a completely surrendered soul.

You have heard about Hanuman, who can become the biggest and minutest. Even the demigods of heaven have such power in this material universe.

## **Waves of a nand**

The atma requires atma for its sustenance. Anatma is that which is foreign to atma.

The anatma - body i.e. material body requires the five elements (earth, water, fire, air and sky) or a transformation of those five elements, foods etc., for the sustenance of the material body. The atma has no birth, no death. The physical body or anatma has birth, death and threefold afflictions.

This material world is full of suffering and distress. There exists variety in this world. As this variety is the cause of extreme suffering, there are waves of sufferings in this material world. Beyond this realm lies the existence of Viraja where there is no creation and no variety. Although it is in the realm of nescience and suffering, there are no waves of suffering. In Brahman dham there is (bliss), but there are no waves of ananda. Waves of bliss do exist in Vaikuntha dham. Upon getting Narayana-bhakti, Catuhsan, being attracted by the fragrance of the offerings of the Lotus Feet of Narayana, gave up Brahmananda and started worshipping Narayana. But, Goloka-Vrindavan is the highest blissful realm where devotees get the highest bliss by coming in contact with Sri Krishna through all kinds of delightful relationships. Goloka Vrindavan is spherical (360 degree) whereas Vaikuntha is a hemisphere (180 degree).

## **Subtle everlasting forms**

In Goloka-Vrindavan, Krishna, Radha and almost all gopis are kishore — adolescent. Those who are elders, parents etc., have grown up bodies, bigger in size, but those are also eternal. Krishna and all cowherd boys are almost of the same size, only Balaram is taller.

As there is no birth and no death and as all relationships are eternal, those relationships are very delightful and everlasting. Everlasting forms are so subtle, they cannot be destroyed. The atom bomb could not destroy the sky of Hiroshima or Nagasaki of Japan, so how can an atom bomb destroy those who are much finer than the sky? As there is no influence of a time factor like we find in this material world, there is no actual existence of past and future, everything is in the present in the transcendental realm of Vraja dham. The sweet pastimes are arranged by Yogamaya to relish the sweet pure love, where the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna and His Absolute Counterpart Spiritual Potency Srimati Radha forget themselves.

## **Start with the hearing of the Holy Name**

It is relevant to go through Sri Jiva Goswami's commentary of the verse of Srimad Bhagavatam, Prahlad-caritra, 7th canto, 5th Chapter, 18th verse and Krama Sandarbha tika (commentary):-

*prathamam namnah sravanam antahkarana-suddhy-artham suddhe karne mpa-sravanena tad-udaya-yogyata bhavati. samyag-udite ca riipe gunanam sphuranam sampadyate. sampanne ca gunanam sphurane parikara- vaisistiyena tad- vaisistiyam sampadyate. tatas tesu nama-mpa-guna-parikaresu samyak sphuritesu lllanam sphuranam sustu bhavati*

First, start with the hearing of the Holy Name from a bona fide devotee because for the revelation of the Holy Name, purification of heart is essential. After that, form, attributes etc. will gradually be revealed. After doing Harinam properly

without offences, the transcendental form, finer than the Name, will be revealed in the pure heart, and after that, transcendental attributes, transcendental associates and then ultimately the finest lila (pastimes) of Krishna will be revealed successively.

*‘nama’, ‘vigraha’, ‘svamp—tina eka-rupa tine ‘bheda’ nahi,—tina deha-dehira, nama-namira krsne nahi ‘bheda’ jivera dharma—nama-deha-svarupe ‘vibheda’ ataeva krsnera ‘nama’, ‘deha’, ‘vilasa’ prakrtendriya-grahya nahe, haya sva-prakasa*

(Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita, Madhya, 17.131-132,134)

The Holy Name, vigraha (Deity) and the original transcendental form are identical as all are saccidananda; all-existence, all-knowledge and all-bliss. Name and named, body and the possessor of the body are non-different from Krishna. A conditioned soul's name, body and real self are different. But Krishna's Holy Name, form and pastimes are non-different. For that reason, they cannot be apprehended by the material sense organs, but can only be realised through revelation.

## **Answer-(2)**

### **The purest and highest prema**

Krishna is the predominating aspect of the moiety and Srimati Radhika is the predominated aspect of the moiety. Moiety means one of two parts of a thing.

There are two sides of prema: union and separation. Prema in separation bestows much more happiness than prema in union. This prema is called adhirudha mahabhava. Here, the manifestation of the object of worship (Krishna's sweet form) is more than the manifestation caused by union. For that reason Nandanandan Krishna appeared in Kali-yuga as Gauranga (inside Krishna outside Radha, He has taken the mood (of worship) of Radha and Her complexion) in order to taste His own extraordinary sweetness as Radha has tasted (the sweetness of prema in separation - vipralamba rasa), as well as to

perform the pastimes of the most munificent form of Godhead, to distribute the highest prema, unnata ujjwala rasa to all, irrespective of caste, creed and nationality. Radharani's prema is the purest and highest. She is most magnanimous. She is prepared to sacrifice everything for the satisfaction of Krishna.

*Na gani apana-duhkha, dekhi' vrajesvari-mukha,  
vraja-janera hrdaya vidare kiba maza' vraja-vasi, vraje asi',  
kena jiyao duhkha sahaibare?*

“I do not consider my grief. I only want His satisfaction. My only object is His contentment. If by giving pain to me, He is highly delighted, that pain will be my greatest blessedness (supreme happiness).”

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## **Sweetness of Sri Krishna**

As long as the sweetness of Sri Krishna is not tasted, this tug-of-war between worldly attraction and Krishna-bhakti will continue. We cannot give up our attraction for worldly objects unless and until we get the taste of the transcendental sweetness of Name, Form, Attributes and Pastimes of Sri Krishna. Of course, even at the stage of sadhana-bhakti we can have some feeling of the transcendental sweetness of Sri Krishna. Progress in the sadhana depends on the intensity of our devotional practice.

In our devotional spiritual cultivation we are to practise detachment from worldly objects and attachment to Sri Krishna simultaneously. We are to give more stress to positive practice than to negative practice. When we try to withdraw ourselves from worldly things, their remembrance comes to our mind.

The undesirable temporary things of the world result in severe suffering at the time of separation from them. However, if we always remember Sri Krishna, devote ourselves to the service of Sri Krishna, Who is All-Good, All-Existence, All-Knowledge and All-Bliss, we will be automatically withdrawn from worldly objects.

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Ad infinitum

I am grateful to \_\_\_\_\_ for reminding me about my Most Revered Siksa Guru, His Divine Grace Parampujyapad Parivrajakacharya, Tridandi Swami Srimad Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Maharaj and to be able to pray for His blessings, by way of providing me with the privilege of writing a preface on her writing of His holy biography.

The Supreme Lord as well as His absolute counterpart, grace-incarnate form, Gurudev are transcendental, beyond comprehension of the conditioned souls of this world. Only a bona fide surrendered soul, to the extent of his degree of submission, can narrate the transcendental qualities of the Supreme Lord and His absolute counterpart Gurudev. As there is no end to the degree of submission there can be no end to the realisation of Their transcendental qualities. A surrendered soul cannot say that his realisation of the Supreme Lord and Gurudev is final, what to speak of conditioned souls. The realisation of God and His Personal Associates has no end; it will go on ad infinitum. Therefore, when we sincerely endeavour to write or speak with humbleness about the glories of the Supreme Lord and Gurudev, They will be satisfied and accept our service, forgiving our shortcomings.

I had the opportunity to be in close contact with him because I was also engaged in the writing and review of the matter for the press along with him. However, I feel this contact was external as due to want of bona fide submission to him, I could not touch his transcendental qualities. From whatever I have understood about his special qualities, he was doing any devotional form with great sincerity and humbleness. I saw him writing Bengali articles quickly and without any spelling mistake. He was an erudite scholar.

As \_\_\_\_\_ is sincerely devoted to her Gurudev, her writings will be more

authentic. I think readers will be spiritually benefited by going through her writings.

Remembrance of Guru, Vaishnavas and Bhagavan will remove all the obstacles and bestow the devotional objective. One can get emancipation from worldly bondage by singing the glories of Vaisnavas and guru. But as Guru and Vaisnavas are transcendental, without their grace we cannot even remember them, pray for their grace or sing their glories. Yet if we are sincere and humble, we shall get their grace as they are all-merciful.

I pay my innumerable prostrated humble obeisances to his lotus feet to forgive me for my offences, which I might have committed knowingly or unknowingly and beg him to offer his causeless mercy unto me.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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## **Deity is not an idol**

It is not always easy to understand the profound meaning of the teachings of Indian saints. They have advised us to worship 'Vigraha' or Deities. The Deity is not an idol, it is very different.

The Supreme Lord is all-powerful. Thus, He can appear in any form, to give service to His devotees. If we say that the Supreme Lord cannot appear in the form of a Deity, then it is irrational talk. Nothing is impossible for the All-Powerful. Not that any object will become the Supreme Lord by somebody saying so but it is illogical to say that the Supreme Lord cannot appear by His own wish in any object i.e. in the form of a Deity.

## **Eyes of Devotion**

We cannot see the Supreme Lord with our material eyes - eyes of lust. When we will submit to Him, surrender to Him, then by His grace, we can see Him, with spiritual devotional eyes. The Supreme Lord can be seen only by the eyes of devotion to those who have the aptitude to serve Him. When the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna was present in Dvapara Yuga, He could not be recognised by Kamsa, Jarasandha etc. When the Supreme Lord appeared as Rama, He also could not be recognised by all. Hiranyakasipu, who was greatly learned and a knower of the Vedas, could not recognise the Supreme Lord Sri Nrsimha Deva with his eyes of lust, Who appeared in front of him supernaturally from a pillar. But his son, Sri Prahlad Maharaj, could recognise Narasimha Deva as the Supreme Lord because he saw with the eyes of devotion.

As stated in the scriptures, He is 'sarva-karana-karanam'. Cause of all causes. If there is no form in the Supreme Lord then there cannot be form in this world. But since this world is full of forms, how can the Supreme Lord be formless? The Supreme Lord has form. He has no material form, liable to perversion, but Transcendental and Spiritual Form.

## **Bhakta charitras**

It will be better for you to study Dhruva charitra (biographies of devotees), Prahlad charitra, Ambarisa Maharaj's charitra, and Ajamil from Srimad Bhagavatam 4th Skanda (Canto), 7th Skanda, 9th Skanda, and 6th Skanda respectively. Sri Sukadev Goswami only started speaking about the lila-katha of Sri Krishna, found in 10th Skanda, to Sri Pariksit Maharaj after holding discourses on 1st Skanda to 9th Skanda, thus making the foundation of being eligible to hear lila- katha.

## **Gradual development of realisation**

I had seen your letter and had gone through it but could not get time earlier to reply due to heavy engagements.

Ecstatic feelings of Divinity are helpful to the extent that we have remembrance of Divinity. It is the devotional scriptural instruction to remember Sri Krishna always and never to forget Him. There are lists of positive assertions - commandments - and negative assertions - prohibitions - to remember Krishna always and never to forget Him. This is the criterion to understand what you are to do and not to do.

Although feelings of Divinity as mentioned in your letter are helpful to some extent for remembrance of Divinity, this is not direct realisation of the Divinity. If there be direct realisation of Divinity, the persons who have got such realisation cannot live in this world. Gradual development of realisation depends on the intensity of sadhana (Devotional practice). Jiva Goswami has said in the commentary of one verse in Srimad Bhagavatam; While doing without tenfold offences gradual developments will be manifested 1) Purification of mind, 2) Revelation of Transcendental Form, 3) Revelation of the Personal Associates of Sri Hari and ultimately 4) Transcendental Delightful Pastimes of Sri Radha-Krishna.

I believe that you have heard that our Paramgurudev, Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakur performed one hundred crores of Harinam (Maha-mantra) at Sri Mayapur dham for six years at a stretch with severe austerity.

I am so so. May All-Merciful Supreme Lord Sri Krishna bless you all. My love to you all.

Affectionately yours,

B. B. Tirtha

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**Realisation according to the degree of submission**



We can know nothing about Sri Krishna and his devotees by our mundane capacities - by material senses, mind and intelligence - because they are beyond the reach of mundane senses. Those transcendental qualities are revealed to a bona fide surrendered soul. The excellence of transcendental qualities is felt according to the degree of submission to the Lord and His devotees.

Those who know the ontological aspect of God and His devotees cannot have vanity at any stage of their realisation. As such, s bhaktas (realised souls) are in their nature submissive and humbler than a blade of grass. I am encouraged to go through the expression of your feelings regarding a true devotee in your long letter. As the Supreme Lord is Infinite, the realisation of His infinite transcendental good qualities cannot be said to be final at any stage of our feeling of those qualities. The degree of correct feeling of the transcendental good qualities of Sri Krishna depends upon the degree of submission.

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**Question to Srila Gurudev** - *We need the mercy of guru but it seems we won't progress if we won't take that mercy, Is it always a matter of our own choice and desire to take the mercy of Guru or not? e.g., think of mercy as a hook coming down then if we hold it we'll be rescued Otherwise not?*

## **Bunch of hooks**

Attachment to non-eternal things is the cause of bondage. Love for the eternal Supreme Lord, Who is All-Existence, All-Knowledge and All-Bliss, is the cause of emancipation. Conditioned souls are drowning in a deep ocean or deep pit from which their release is almost impossible. The Supreme Lord, out of compassion, descends into that deep ocean or pit to rescue the fallen souls, taking various Forms. These Forms are compared with hooks. For instance, if a bucket falls into a deep well, to lift the bucket a bunch of hooks, tightly fastened

with a strong rope, is dropped into the well. Then by turning the rope throughout the well, one of the hooks catches the bucket. By drawing up the rope, the bucket will be lifted from the deep well. As every conscious being has got relative independence of will and taste, he can catch hold of any Form of God tightly as per his liking. Then he will be taken out from the ocean. So, God descends into this world in so many Forms (Fish, Tortoise, Boar, Nrsimhadeva, Vamana, etc.) to attract the conditioned souls. Whomever they like, they can catch hold of. Catching should be sincere and steadfast. Like God, realised personal associates of God also may descend to rescue the fallen souls. The instance of the fastening of Gopala by mother Yasoda will be a satisfactory reply.

## **Infinite within finite**

Mother Yasoda, measuring the belly of her little child, brought the rope but could not fasten it as the rope was short by two fingers. She was very surprised. She brought another rope and joined it with the first rope and again it was two fingers less. The rope was made very long (say more than a mile) yet she could not fasten the child. Every time it was two fingers less. As the Supreme Lord in that little child Form is infinite, infinite miles of rope will not be able to fasten the child. This is His inconceivable power. Within a finite form, He is infinite. Rabindranath Tagore has also said, “simara madhye asim tumi” - God is infinite within a limited Form. Yasoda was very tired. All the gopis were laughing from a distance. Yet Yasoda did not stop trying to fasten Gopala. Ultimately, the Supreme Lord, being attracted by the tremendous sweet affection of His mother, accepted fastening. Then the child could be tied by the first rope. Two fingers being less every time indicates that to get God, God's grace as well as sincere steadfast endeavor of service to attract the grace of God are both essential. When these two coincide, the desired fruit will be achieved.

Only devotion can propitiate god Bhagavan said to Uddhava:

*bhaktyaham ekaya grahyah sraddhayatma priyah satam bhaktih punati man-nistha sva-pakan api sambhavat*

(Srimad-Bhagavatam 11.14.21)

“I, being the Supreme Lord residing in the hearts of all and really beloved of all, can be realisable by sadhus by the manifestation of exclusive devotion due to the influence of faith in Me. One-pointed exclusive devotion can even sanctify one of the lowest caste.”

In his Padyavali, Srila Rupa Goswami has also referred to this verse written by a South- Indian versifier:

*vyadhasyacaranam dhruvasya ca vayo vidya gajendrasya ka kubjayah kim u  
rupa rupam adhikam kim tat sudamno dhanam*

*varhsah ko vidurasya yadava-pater ugrasya kim bhaktya tusyati kevalam na ca  
bhakti-priyo madhavah*

“The hunter's previous killing nature, Dhruva's young age, Gajendra's (leader of wild elephants) want of education, Kubja's (hunch-backed woman) lack of beauty, Sudama's extreme poverty, Vidura's socially depressed lineage, and Ugrasena's (king of Yadavas) lack of virility were not taken into consideration. They all propitiated God by pure devotion. Madhava (an appellation of the Supreme Lord) is gratified only by bhakti and not by worldly qualifications or merits.” (Padyavali 8)

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## **Goverdhan non-different from Krishna**

I am glad to know your safe return through telephonic message

When His Divine Grace Most Revered Gurudev played the pastimes of being seriously indisposed and doctors did not give any hope of His recovery, I became unbalanced and took recourse to do something for my own mundane benefit, which is actually anti- devotional. My purpose of going to Govardhan was to rescue myself from the serious troubles which might occur after the disappearance of Gurudev. The target of a bona fide devotee should always be

for the satisfaction of the object of worship and not for anything else. This wrong example should not be imitated by others. The pastimes of appearance and disappearance of the Supreme Lord and a bonafide devotee, who is a personal associate of the Supreme Lord, are eternal. In this connection we should remember the advice of Bhagavan Sri Ramchandra at Modadrumdhip to Sri Sita Devi under a banyan tree, vide Navadhip Dham Mahatamya written by Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur. There is a gulf of difference between Most Revered Gurudev, the personal associate of Supreme Lord Sri Krishna, and me, a conditioned soul of the world. I gave immense troubles to all Vaisnavas and to our revered Panda of Govardhan for my own personal interest. Govardhan is identical with Krishna and the devotees of Krishna. Govardhan puja indicates worship of Krishna and worship of His devotees. Our relationships with Krishna and His devotees are eternal. We should not forget this; we should not miss the target.

Supreme Lord Sri Krishna willing, I desire to go next January, 2004 for inauguration of the Math office there. I think the function should be held on the ground floor.

The place should be made as clean as possible. For this if any contribution is necessary, I shall try to contribute. You should consult this with all Math member devotees there.

Hope this will find you all in good health and spirit. I may go to Dehradun on 16th May and return to Chandigarh on 18th instant. After that I may plan to go back to Calcutta. Date of departure to Calcutta is not yet decided.

My love to you all.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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**No anxiety for a surrendered soul**

The moment we shall submit to Sri Krishna unconditionally, all our ills and sufferings will go. A completely surrendered soul has got no separate desire of his own. He is happy in whatever circumstance he is put by the will of his beloved Supreme Master.

**Saranagati is six fold.** We are to practise it as follows:

- (1) We are to accept all that is congenial for pure devotion
- (2) Give up all that is not congenial.
- (3) We should have firm faith that Sri Krishna will protect us under all circumstances — from outside foes and inside foes (passions).
- (4) He is the only Sustainer and Maintainer of our real and apparent selves.
- (5) We should know that all belongs to Him, i.e., we are His (atmanivendan).
- (6) We should give up all material egos - should think that we are spiritual sparks, minutest parts of the marginal potency (tatastha sakti) of Supreme Lord Sri Krishna, i.e., we should not have mundane vanities. We should be humbler than a blade of grass.

A completely surrendered soul has no cause for being worried under any circumstance and under any pressure in this most transitory world. Supreme Lord Sri Krishna always protects and sustains a bona fide surrendered soul. According to our karma, we get congenial and uncongenial environments. Nobody is to be blamed for this.

Only complete unconditional surrender to the Lotus Feet of Supreme Lord Sri Krishna can bestow on us eternal peace. This world is not the place of peace. Nobody can get peace with material egos and material desires. If we want peace, we are to transcend this material realm. Whatever is done by the will of the Supreme Lord, Who is All-Good, is for the eternal benefit of all. We reap the fruits of our own actions. It is wrong to blame others for our own suffering. They may be instrumental, but they are not the cause. We should not be perturbed under any circumstance and give up bhajan, in our short duration of stay in this transitory world. A completely surrendered soul is always protected and

maintained by Sri Krishna. There is no cause of anxiety for him. He remains calm under all circumstances.

We are controlled by Absolute Will. We cannot do anything against His Will. Whether we shall lead an ascetic life or household life depends upon His will. If He wishes anything, nobody can obstruct it.

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## **Nobody can bribe him**

Nobody is to be blamed for our afflictions and drawbacks. We reap the fruits of our own actions. It was the advice of Sri Narada to Dhruva: 'Don't blame others for your own sufferings. We get similar kind of sufferings as we inflict upon others. As long as we have this ignorance of blaming others for our sufferings, we shall not get the Grace of God.' Dhruva, taking the advice of his guru Narada, relinquished his ignorance of blaming others and called God's Name from the core of his heart with one-pointed devotion. All hindrances of Dhruva were removed and those persons who were hostile to him became favourable automatically, without asking for this. God controls and gives the fruits of our actions, not man. We should rectify our karmas (acts) and not blame others.

God and His absolute counterpart Gurudev (real Gurudev) are impartial. God is equal to all. As He is Absolute (purna), nobody can bribe Him and nobody can force Him to do anything which is unjust. But God may test a devotee by putting him in adverse circumstances to qualify him to get the service of His Lotus Feet. We shall be successful in the test - examination.

Sincere souls will never be deceived. So don't be disheartened. My love to you all.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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## **Without sadhana, sadhyavastu, cannot be achieved**

Whether you are in pravritti marg or nivritti marg you are to start bhajan. It is a long journey. We will not get anything all of a sudden. For enslaved jivas, suddha bhakti - Suddha harinama, is difficult, but if there is sincere desire to perform bhakti and chant harinama correctly, Sri Krishna and Sri Krishna's bhakta will be at your back to help you. By their grace you will succeed in getting suddha bhakti and in uttering harinama rightly.

Without sadhana, sadhyavastu, the goal of life cannot be achieved. You are to perform sadhana with sincerity and steadfastness. Progress in the sadhana depends on the intensity of our devotional practice.

## **Complete surrender is the only solution**

We should not be disappointed by the happenings of the world and give up our bhajan. This world is the place of turmoil and disturbances caused by the illusory energy of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna. Only a completely surrendered soul can emancipate himself from the grip of illusory energy and surmount the ocean of births and deaths and threefold afflictions. We are to practice six-fold which is the basis of devotional life. Without saranagati, there cannot be bhakti.

We should not be perturbed by mundane worldly loss and gain. We should be very careful about the eternal benefit of the eternal self which will go with us. Whatever is done by the Will of Supreme Lord Sri Krishna, Who is All-Good, is for the eternal benefit of all. Jivas reap the fruits of their own karma. Nobody is to be blamed for this. We should not be perturbed under any circumstance and

give up bhajan in our short duration of stay in this transitory world. A completely surrendered soul is always protected and maintained by Sri Krishna. There is no cause of anxiety for them. They remain calm under all circumstances. We are controlled by Absolute- Will. We cannot do anything against His Will. Whether we shall lead an ascetic life or household life depends upon His Will. If He wishes anything, nobody can obstruct it.

## **Remove your repugnance**

We cannot see adjustment and cannot find solution by our own capacity. Total unconditional submission is the only way of solving all problems. Jivas commit offence at the Lotus Feet of Sri Krishna when they being eternal servants of Sri Krishna, become averse to Sri Krishna. As long as jivas will not remove this offence there will be no practical solution. Maya will surely envelop them and there will be desire for enjoyment, which will hurl them down to hell — intense suffering.

The root cause of the disease is to be eradicated otherwise undesirable symptoms will crop up. Hence, the root cause of all troubles, repugnance to Sri Krishna, is to be removed. We are averse to Sri Krishna from time immemorial. This averseness cannot be removed all of a sudden. It may require thousands of births or one birth. Even Ambarisa Maharaj, the great devotee, could only gradually conquer all material desires. Nothing can be achieved all of a sudden. Sadhya — ultimate blissful spiritual existence — cannot be attained without sadhana. Association of bona fide real sadhus is essential for spiritual enhancement.

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## **Serve to get attachment**



I am pleased to see that you have sincerely tried to serve the Math which is exclusively meant for the service of Sri Krishna and His devotees. The duty of a servitor is to try to serve without any desire for the fruits of the action. We can act, but we have got no hold on the fruits of the action. The fruits of actions are controlled by the Supreme Lord (Gita 2.47). The main purpose of our endeavour to serve is to become attached to the Served (Sri Krishna and His devotees). That attachment will go with us and everything will remain in this world.

This has been done by the Absolute Will of Sri Guru and Sri Gauranga. We were only instruments. Your impetus for this is due to the Will of Lord, Who is All Good.

You are blessed as you have been selected by Most Revered Srlla Gurudev to become an instrument to this. Whatever you have done, you have done well. I am now relieved of my worries.

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## **Riots and violence**

There is serious dislocation of communication here due to agitation of a section of people. There are occasional strikes and also acts of violence. Everywhere we find disturbance now. There is outbreak of conflagration of group clashes throughout the world. Only the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna can devour this conflagration and rescue us. A completely surrendered soul to Sri Krishna can attain eternal peace. You should be careful in your movement and behaviour in this present age of unrest and unbalanced mentality of people.

I am worried to read in the newspaper, news of bomb explosions and disturbances. People have become so violent and barbarous that they do not hesitate in committing heinous crimes by assassinating innocent persons, to fulfil their political ends. All humanitarian considerations have been relinquished. A section of people has become more ferocious than beasts. People have now

become habitual to these day-to-day horrible crimes. They are now seeking justifications in committing such great sins.

There is no other way of getting emancipation from such worldly conflagrations except complete unconditional surrender to the Lotus Feet of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna. Only He can rescue us and nobody else. We are always to remember the saying of Lord Sri Krishna in the Gita (18.62)—

*tam eva saranam gaccha sarva-bhavena tat-prasadat param santim sthanam  
prapsyasi sasvatam*

O scion of Bharata, surrender unto Him utterly. By His grace you will attain transcendental peace and the supreme and eternal abode.

The world is the prison-house for the punishment of culprits who are averse to Sri Krishna. We cannot get permanent peace in this prison-house; it will always remain disturbed. In fact the whole country is now disturbed. Nowhere will you find peace. Yet we are to do our duty and perform bhajan. The whole world is under conflagration. Supreme Lord Sri Krishna drank forest fires at and Bhandiravan and rescued His associates who took absolute shelter at His Lotus Feet. Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur elucidates the meaning of forest fires—

(i) oppression of atheists and irreligious persons over the righteous and the theists.

(ii) group-clashing due to false egos and false interests.

As long as we shall not submit unconditionally to Supreme Lord Sri Krishna, we cannot be rescued from the forest-fires of worldly afflictions.

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**Question to Srila Gurudev** - *I want to feel in heart that I mean my love for Krishna. I only know there is love for You and the devotees but there is no love for Krishna in my heart; He is so far away from my daily situation. My chanting is empty, meaningless, just words. It is not that I do not want to serve Krishna. I*

*want to, but I want to feel love by doing so. Can You help me to find that love; just enough to keep me going on the path of bhakti?*

## **Follow the Mahajans**

Prahlad Maharaj is one of the pure devotees, great saints, amongst the renowned 12 Mahajans (highest order of saints). This is the scriptural prescript, that if anybody wants foremost eternal welfare, he can get it from the teachings of the 12 mahajans. When Yudhishtir Maharaj was asked by demigod Dharma, — 'What is the actual path for eternal welfare?' he said, 'mahajano yena gatah sa panthah' the path accepted by the 12 Mahajans is the only path for getting eternal benefit. This is applicable to all human beings. A real Mahajan sees that all living beings in this universe are connected with the Supreme Lord. Love of Supreme Lord Sri Krishna means actual love for all living beings, who are connected with Him. Prahlad Maharaj's pithy saying to his father Hiranyakasipu, Srimad Bhagavatam (7.8.9)— “My dear father, please give up your demoniac mentality. “Do not discriminate in your heart between enemies and friends; make your mind equipoised towards everyone. Except for the uncontrolled and misguided mind, there is no enemy within this world. When one sees everyone on the platform of equality, one then comes to the position of worshiping the Lord perfectly.”

## **Criterion of pure love**

Prahlad Maharaj also said to the demon boys, (Srimad Bhagavatam 7.6.19) “You may think you are young children of 4-5 years of age, so how can you have contact with the Absolute Supreme Lord? But you should know definitely, without doubt, there is no difficulty to please Supreme Lord Sri Krishna, as He is the dearest of all living beings. It is an axiomatic truth in this world for all time to come.” Even in this world we find the mother has got natural affection for her child, although there may be some inherent desires in the heart; but God's love is

always unconditional. When a child gives a part of its biscuit besmeared with phlegm and dirt's to mother for eating, the mother takes it to satisfy the child. Prahlad Maharaj has further said, it may be difficult for a wife to please her husband, it may be difficult for a husband to please his wife, it may be difficult for parents to please children, it may be difficult for children to please parents here in this world, but there is no difficulty to please Krishna as He is the dearest and in His love there is no contamination of condition. An illustration may be given between magnet and iron. Magnet attracts iron and iron is attracted by magnet. But when there is rust on the iron, this nature is not manifested. Similarly, Krishna is like a magnet and we are like iron, we have got natural affection but our souls have been enveloped by dirt which is to be removed by the association of bona fide sadhus.

A true devotee never wants anything from his object of worship Supreme Lord Sri Krishna. If the Supreme Lord is happy by not giving His contact to the devotee, the devotee thinks whatever Krishna wants that is his desire. If Krishna is happy by not appearing before him, he does not want His appearance. This is the criterion of pure love.

I am on A.C.T. (Artery Clearance Therapy) in Ludhiana (India). I have already taken ten intravenous drips. I still have to take another 20-25 drips. I reached here in Ashok Vihar, Delhi to participate in the month long Karttik-Vrata —  
Damodar

vrata which started from this morning. I shall have to go back to Ludhiana again on 9th November, 2003 for that drip therapy. Some foreign devotees have participated in Damodar-vrata vow. Many others will come on different days.

I am now a bit better. I am holding discourses but devotees prohibit me to participate in nagar sankirtan.

My love to you all. May All-merciful Sri Guru-Gauranga Radha-Krishna bless you.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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**Question to Srila Gurudev** - *(1) Even though I have so much external spiritual success, I am completely unhappy and unlucky in my real attempts to reach spiritual consciousness. I have got most odious qualities, like perverted lust, envy and anger against all in any case. Because of that I've got no taste to chant Harinam. (2) Mostly here (outside India), all the people are against worshipping Krishna. What service do you want from me here?*

## **Transcendental realm vs material world**

It is not possible for me to write a big letter to you replying all your questions. You should understand the difference of this material world and the Transcendental Spiritual Realm. Sri Krishna is the only Master and Enjoyer in the Transcendental Spiritual Realm, Vrindavana dham, and there, all others are His servitors in different love-relations. The target of the servitors there is only for the satisfaction of Sri Krishna and for nothing else. Whereas in this world, the conditioned souls, all think themselves as masters and enjoyers and they want to enjoy and lord it over others. This whole material world is a place of forest fire, where all are egocentric and they are fighting with each other for material interests. When centers of interests are many, clashing is inevitable. We remain in this world, with misconception of the self and for the fulfillment of material non-eternal desires, thinking we can be happy. It can never be possible.

## **It will take time to change habits**

You have already heard several times from vaisnavas that the real self of the jiva is the eternal servant of Supreme Lord Sri Krishna and when he forgets his relation with Sri Krishna and is enveloped by the illusory energy, he is hurled

down in this material world to receive the punishment for his aversion to Sri Krishna, for his reluctance to serve Krishna. The conditioned souls, due to forgetfulness of their relation to Sri Krishna, are passing through cycles of births and deaths from time immemorial. It is not so easy for them to change their propensity to enjoy this world.

Even a person who starts drinking wine and becomes habituated to it, cannot give up his bad habit all of a sudden, despite understanding fully well that intoxication is bad for him. In the like manner, we have imbibed through cycles of births and deaths, so many various propensities in this world. It will take time to change our habits. For that if we lose patience, we cannot get the objective. Sadhana vinu sadhya vastu keha nahi paya - nobody can get his objective without performing penance for it. A neophyte to devotional practice may be restless at any moment, if he does not get actual association of a bona fide suddha bhakta. It is not so easy to get such association in this material world, at least in western countries where they are more inclined for material enjoyments. We should not be disappointed by this. If we are sincere, we will never be deceived and Krishna will protect us. God is All- Merciful and His personal associates are also All-Merciful.

You should remember four Nrsimha Mantras, each four times, as well as Pancha-tattava and Mahamantra, each four times before going to bed and after rising up from bed.

Nrsimha Bhagavan can remove all ulterior desires and bestow pure devotion to Him. My love to you all. May All-Merciful Sri Guru Gauranga Radha-Krishna bless you.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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**Question to Srila Gurudev** - *Often I feel some anger, irritation and frustration. That disturbs my relationships with both the devotees and the regular people. In*

*addition, due to the same problem, I can't concentrate on anything; whenever I try to do something I can't do it well enough.*

## **God is impartial**

Without firm belief, no bhajan can be started. By serving Supreme Lord Who is One, all are served. Sri Krishna Dvaipayana Veda Vyasa Muni has given two analogies for this in Srimad Bhagavatam: (1) by pouring water at the root of the tree, all parts of the tree are nourished and (2) by giving food to the stomach, all the limbs of the body are nourished. The Supreme Lord is residing in the heart of every living being. So He understands whether a votary has got actual faith in Him or not. When there will be sincerity of belief, you will get the fruit.

In worshipping the Supreme Lord, it is essential to know that nobody on earth is to be blamed for our own difficulties. We reap the fruits of our own actions. Others are not the cause, although they may be instrumental. Dhruva, son of Uttanapada Maharaj, believed in the instruction of his mother Suniti Devi and after that the instruction of his guru Narada Goswami and effaced from his heart all hostile mentalities to anybody on earth and called from the core of his heart. God was satisfied and as a result his father, his stepmother and all others who were not congenial to him, all started crying immensely in his separation. This is the difference between an ordinary aspirant for worship of God and a sincere devotee, who can immediately accept all the teachings of *guruvarg* and perform worship of God from the core of the heart. Ordinary aspirants hear many things but cannot accept those teachings from the heart. As God is Absolute Complete Reality, He is equal to all. He is naturally impartial. It is not the fact that He will grace to Dhruva, Prahlada, Ambarisa Maharaj and not others. Sun is giving light everywhere without discrimination of good or bad place. Some may accept the light for their benefit and some may not. What can the Sun do? Unconditional submission to the Lord is necessary to get His grace.

You will find in Prahlada's teaching that the nine forms of bhakti can be rightly practised only with the fulfillment of the conditions (i) the worshipper should have the knowledge that he is of God or Supreme Lord i.e. with total submission to Him and (ii) it should be done only for His propitiation.

When we desire good behaviour from somebody and do not get it, we become unbalanced. Desireless devotees are happy under all circumstances.

I am leaving for New Delhi on 11th October, 2004 by morning flight. After short halts at New Delhi, Chandigarh and Ludhiana, I shall reach Bhatinda (Punjab) to observe the month-long Kartik vrata there.

May All-Merciful Sri Guru-Gauranga bless you. My love to you all.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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## **Incapability of mundane senses**

Praying blessings of Sri Guru, Sri Gauranga and Sri Radha-Krishna unto sincere souls desirous of serving Sri Krishna and His devotees.

I am surprised and glad to come in contact with you and your wife who have come to India to meet me. Everything depends on the Grace of All-Merciful Supreme Lord.

I have heard from our most revered Gurudev that only by the actual Grace of the Pure Devotees of Supreme Lord, this human birth will be successful. In this context I am giving an instance from Srimad Bhagavatam and Sri Chaitanya Charitamrta to get the highest bliss and to get the highest object fully.

*atah sri-krsna-namadi na bhaved indriyaih*

*sevonmukhe hi jihvadau svayam eva sphuraty adah*

(Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita, Madhya, 17.136)



The most important highest pure devotee Sri Rupa Goswami gave this highest instruction. In the big book 'Sri Chaitanya: His Life and Associates', page 153 - 'She who was known in Vrndavana as Rupa Manjari has now appeared as Rupa Goswami. Lalita is chief amongst the Sakhis who make up Radharani's entourage, and Rupa Manjari is the foremost amongst those Sakhis who follow Lalita. It is for this reason that Rupa Goswami was chief amongst the six Goswamis in Gaura Lila.'

Sri Rupa Goswami very strongly warned all that Sri Krishna's Name, Beauty, Qualities and Pastimes cannot be known by the worldly use of non-eternal senses. Ordinarily, all those persons are deprived from actual knowledge of real realisation. Real actual devotees have got the capacity for strong realisation of the actual eternal existence of Name, Beauty, Qualities and Pastimes. Without the grace of Srila Rupa Goswami actual realisation is impossible. It is hard for the worldly human beings to realize Supreme Lord without the grace of suddha bhakta.

## **The most perplexing**

I want to give an instance to you from a Great Personality, Sri Yudhistir Maharaj.

He has given this example -

*ahany ahani bhutani gacchantiha yama mandiram sesah sthavaram icchanti kim ascaryam atah param*

Everyday the dead bodies of human beings are entering the funeral (which is stated in India as Yama-mandir). But more perplexing is this - those who are living always think they will remain in this world permanently, what can be more surprising than this.

Also about the history of 'Dhruva' (Page No. 20, Book - Sages of Ancient India) if you go through, all your doubts will be removed. I hope you have got this book.

I am leaving tomorrow to get the Grace of Sri Jagannath Deb at Chakdah.

Whatever I have written you can go through.

My love to you all. May Supreme Lord Sri Krishna grace you.

Affectionately Yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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## **Isvara parama-Krishna**

Most Reverend \_\_\_\_\_,

I am grateful to you for your motherly affection. By the grace of Sri Radha-Krishna, you have shown your actual love to me.

I bow down to you for your wonderful respect to Brahma-samhita. First sloka of Sri Brahma-samhita is wonderful.

*Isvarah paramah krishnah*

*anadir adir govindah sarva-karana-karanam*

Saccidananda (eternal and omniscient and ever blissful) Vighraha (Embodiment) Sri Krishna is Parameshwar (Supreme Personality). He is Svayrhrupa (Self-manifest), Anadi (Beginningless) and He is principal cause of all Vishnu and Vaishnavas and He is cause of all causes. (Sri Gaudiya-kanthahara book in Bengali Pg. 93).

You expressed your humbleness whether it will be possible to get the Holy Objective.

We all here are grateful to your humbleness.

I always pray for your blessings. Although my present age is about 90 years, I pray to you to bestow your motherly affection.

I do not know how I can submit my prayer to you as I am deprived of getting proper address of you and also your son so that I write to you.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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## **PART 6 Practicing Devotion in Family Life**

Mundane relations are not actual relations; worldly relations are always changeable. Our actual relationship is with the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna. Household devotees, both man and woman, should always think that the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna is the actual owner of the house, husband, wife and children. All family members are the servitors of Śrī Krishna.

### **For householders**

A household devotee should lead his household life for the service of Śrī Krishna and His devotees, relinquishing all anti-devotional acts and habits. Śrī Krishna is the Master of the house and the inmates of the house are His servitors. It is the instruction of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu to gṛhastha vaiṣṇavas:

- 1) To do Harināma,
- 2) To serve vaiṣṇavas and
- 3) To worship Deities

If there is any difficulty in performing archan of Deities, they must serve vaiṣṇavas and do nāma-saṅkīrtana. With the association of śuddha bhaktas they will get inspiration. It will be a reminder to them that their life is for the service of Śrī Krishna and for nothing else. It is very difficult for a householder to remain totally aloof from the transitory surroundings and the influence of the

temporary physical relations.

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**Question to Śrīla Gurudev** - (1) *Śrīla Sachidānanda Bhaktivinode Ṭhākura has written that one should follow the varṇāśrama dharma until one has transcended the material plane. But in western countries such a system does not exist. How should I conduct my activities in such case so that there will be no hindrance in my bhajan?*

(2) *My mother is organising weekly meetings for devotees. Please give us some advice on how to perform those meetings.*

(3) *Who do you think should translate the Holy biography of Śrīla Bhakti Dayita Mādhav Goswāmī Mahārāj for centennial celebrations?*

## **A prison house**

Received your letter and noted the contents.

Our previous guru, Śrīla Sachidānanda Bhaktivinode Ṭhākura, has described this material world as a prison house where the souls who are averse to the Supreme Lord are hurled down as prisoners. Prisoners cannot expect to find actual abiding peace in this prison house of the world. If someone still considers worldly sensuous enjoyments to be good, that reflects the severity of the disease in that person. Śrīla Bhaktivinode Ṭhākura has stated in his hymn about this material world: 'I do not like this world, which is replete with birth, death and infirmity. Worldly wealth and relationships with wife, children etc are all non-eternal and do not belong to anyone. The relationships with parents, wife, children, brothers, sisters and others that appear real now will vanish after death.'

After passing through 8,000,000 species, we have attained the precious human birth, which is the competent boat to cross over this ocean of births and deaths and the threefold afflictions. God has granted the power of discrimination to human beings to be able to distinguish between good and bad, eternal and non-eternal. Despite this, one who spoils his valuable time just in eating, sleeping, defending and mating like the birds and beasts and does not worship the Supreme Lord, Who is All- Existence, All- Knowledge and All-Bliss is most unfortunate.

As we go to a doctor for the treatment of various diseases, a fortunate person will approach a spiritual doctor - a bona fide guru - for the amelioration of the tremendous suffering of the disease of repeated births and deaths.

Our Most Revered Gurudev, before His disappearance, advised His disciples that the desires of wealth, sex-enjoyment and name and fame are the greatest obstacles for worship of the Supreme Lord. Votaries should give up all anti-devotional desires. Of course, it is very difficult for a neophyte-aspirant to give up these unholy desires. The conditioned souls are attracted by such things. These desires remain in the neophyte aspirants but those who seek their eternal welfare should not give indulgence to these desires.

## **The two paths**

There are two paths—the path of sensuous enjoyment and the path of eternal welfare. 999 people out of 1000 or more are running after sensuous enjoyments. In the beginning, the path of sensuous enjoyment appears to be nectar but the consequence is poisonous. On the path of sense enjoyment, the risk of contacting various diseases must also be seriously considered. Those unfortunate persons, who are inclined to enjoy without restriction, take the risk of becoming infected

by diseases such as AIDS and so on. On the other side the path of eternal welfare, where the aspirant restricts the passions and enjoyments of the senses, seems at the beginning to be like poison but the consequence is nectarian. Only those who have taken to the path of eternal welfare can worship the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna.

We should not indulge in anti-devotional activities of sensual enjoyment. We should completely abandon and never adore these propensities. A sincere aspirant should never emulate unfortunate, evil-minded people. Otherwise what will determine the difference between a votary and an ordinary enslaved jīva?

*'na jātu kāmāḥ kāmānām upabhogena śāmyati haviṣā kṛṣṇa-vartmeva bhūya evābhivardhate'* - If we pour 'ghee' (purified butter) into fire, the flames will increase. Similarly, if we fulfill our desires of lust, the lust-fire will also increase. It will not be extinguished. Therefore, fulfilling such desires is not the procedure for obtaining deliverance from lusty desires. However, if we pour a huge quantity of ghee at a time into the fire, the fire will be extinguished. Analogously, if we have a craving for the Absolute Whole Śrī Krishna then this craving will extinguish the fire of worldly or sense- gratifying desires.

The association of bona fide sādhus is essential for neophytes for their devotional and spiritual progress. In the case of want of bona fide devotees, they should take the help of the powerful spiritual sayings of saints by going through the devotional scriptures. One should also worship Tulsi with great devotion and pray for Her grace. The positive performance of devotional methods with devoutness is more effective than the negative endeavor to restrict anti-devotional aptitudes.

As I am very busy during the present preaching tour, it will not be possible for me to write an elaborate letter. Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna willing, if we shall be at your place during the upcoming preaching tour, I shall take time to discuss things in detail with you.

To explain briefly, the varṇāśrama social system, whether daiva or adaiva, is unknown in the western countries. As per my practical experience, this social system of family life does not exist in the western countries. In India, there are two ways of worshipping the Supreme Lord— pravṛtti-mārg and nivṛtti-mārg - 'pravṛttir eṣā bhūtānāṃ nivṛttis tu mahā-phalā'. Pravṛtti-mārg is generally befitting to all conditioned souls. In nivṛtti-mārg, there is the surety of attaining the highest objective, but persons who are eligible for this are rarely to be found. In India we see that not all are eligible for the ascetic order and it naturally follows that in the western countries eligible persons will be even scarcer. Nonetheless, by the special grace of the Supreme Lord, there may be some deserving persons to accept the ascetic order in the western countries. There is also difficulty in the following of pravṛtti-mārg in the western countries, because if marriage exists only for sense gratification, without taking into account the different aspects of family life, then at any moment the marriage relationship may be severed. You are to make a decision in regard to this after careful consideration of all the pros and cons.

## **Weekly meetings for devotees**

I am glad to know that your revered mother is organising weekly meetings for devotees. In the weekly sittings you can start with the teachings of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu - His writing, Śikṣāṣṭakam, with the commentaries of Śrīla Bhaktivinode Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Goswāmī Ṭhākura. After that, you may go through Upadeśāmṛta, written by Śrīla Rūpā Goswāmī with the explanations of Śrīla Bhaktivinode Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Goswāmī Ṭhākura. Gradually, you may go through Jaiva Dharma, Śrī Chaitanya Charitāmṛta, Śrī Chaitanya Bhāgavatā and Śrīmad Bhāgavatam. Also you may read the Gītā with the commentaries of Śrīla Viśvanāth Chakravartī and Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇ and the explanations of Śrīla Bhaktivinode Ṭhākura.

A 3-year extensive program has been fixed from 2003-2005 to commemorate the occasion of the Centenary Function of our Most Revered Gurudev Om Vishnupad Śrīla Bhakti Dayita Mādhav Goswāmī Mahārāj. A translation of the



biography of our Most Revered Gurudev will be necessary before your arrangement of the celebration of the function. The translator should have accurate knowledge of both languages.

May All-Merciful Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga bless you all. My love to you.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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**Question to Śrīla Gurudev** - *I am in a grhastha āśram. Due to my association with non-devotees and materialistic persons at work, my spiritual practice is getting affected. I desire to accept vānaprastha āśram. I do not have any children and my wife will be taken care either by her parents or mine. Is it possible?*

## **Marriage life is religious**

*Pravṛttir eṣa bhūtānām nivṛttis tu mahā-phala* - Ordinarily, human beings are eligible for pravṛtti mārg, i.e., a household married life. The root cause for the conditioned souls to pass through 84 lakhs of species is their aversion to the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna. After passing through 80 lakhs of species one can get the precious human birth. This human birth is congenial for the worship of the Supreme Lord because of the discriminating power given by the Lord to human beings. A human being has the power of discrimination between good and bad, eternal and non-eternal etc. After passing through many cycles of births and deaths, the impressions of the force of sense-gratification also persist. Even in the western countries they know human beings possess both animality and rationality. It is very difficult for conditioned souls to restrain the animal instinct of sense gratification. So, most of the human beings are entitled to worship the

Supreme Lord in pravṛtti mārg. A conditioned soul remaining in pravṛtti mārg is not able to devote his full energy for the service of the Supreme Lord because he must give his attention for the maintenance of the family.

Vedic injunction is the injunction of the Supreme Lord. Those who are unable to restrain sex desire are not entitled for vānaprastha or sannyās āśram. From brahmacarya āśram, if anybody wants to accept household life, he can do so by taking permission of his guru.

In Vedic order the wife is called 'bhāryyā' and at the time of marriage the husband takes the responsibility of maintaining her. It is stated in the scriptures 'putrārthe kriyate bhāryyā' i.e. one should marry for begetting children by observing all the regulations enjoined in the Vedas. This is also a religious life. One should not marry for sense- gratification only. After marriage whether one gets a son or not depends on the Lord's will. In my opinion it will not be good for you to change it now. Both of you, following ideal household life, should worship Krishna and His devotees.

In India, one can accept vānaprastha āśram only after 50 years of age and not before that. Even vānaprastha āśram one can observe with or without wife.

Although nivṛtti mārg, i.e., sannyās āśram is congenial for engaging and devoting all the time for worship of Śrī Krishna and nothing else, this sort of competent person is rarely to be found in this world. After sannyās āśram no one is supposed to go back to household life as it will be a spiritual fall. So it is not wise to take a sudden decision of accepting sannyās āśram.

**Surrender is the best medicine**

An actually bona fide surrendered soul is protected by the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna whether he is in gr̥hastha āśram or he has accepted the ascetic order. We are peaceful when we see adjustment under all circumstances. We cannot make the environment adjust to us but we are to adjust ourselves with the environment. A conditioned soul reaps the fruit of his own actions - good or bad. It is my advice that it will be good for you not to take any decision by your own initiative. You should continue to pray for the grace of guru, vaiṣṇavas, personal associates of Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu such as the six Goswāmīs and especially Nityānanda Prabhu and Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu. Depend on Them absolutely and I am sure They will do whatever is beneficial for your eternal welfare. They are All-Merciful and All-Powerful. I myself after joining the institution as an ascetic submitted my prayer to my Most Revered Gurudev to give me proper advice. He advised me - śaraṇāgati is the best medicine of all problems.

As I am busy here, I have got no time to speak more on this matter. Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna willing, if I come in contact with you, I shall speak to you in detail.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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## **Marriage system**

Received your letter and noted the contents.

Whenever we had been to \_\_\_\_\_, we stayed at your house. The house is respectable and also comfortable for us. You left your own house and stayed in another person's house known to you, thinking about our comforts to stay at your place. This proves you have got sincere desire to serve the Vaiṣṇavas.

In fact, I had no knowledge that you were not married and you never told me you wanted to marry. In India, generally this is the rule for girls - first to remain under the shelter of parents and after that, by marriage, to remain under the shelter of husband and in old age, under the shelter of a competent son. Married life of a girl should be at a young age. The society in India is quite different from society in western countries. Here marriage is done in the presence of priest, parents, guardians and other well-wisher friends and the marriage relationship will last till the end of life. But it is my experience that married life relations may not be lasting in foreign countries. You are to marry according to your society and government rules. So if you get a Vaiṣṇava husband who will accept you as wife permanently, there cannot be any objection to it.

## **Always remember Krishna**

In the Gītā, Śrī Krishna has advised - to those who worship the Supreme Lord with one- pointed devotion, God will bestow on them that sort of wisdom to understand what is good and what is bad and they can achieve the ultimate Blissful Transcendental Realm. Śrī Krishna also said, 'A sincere soul will never be deceived'. The criterion to understand what we are to do and what we are not to do, is given by Veda Vyās Muni himself in Padma Purāṇa - we are to always remember Krishna, never to forget Him. There are some prescribed devotional practices to remember Krishna and there are also some prohibitions against those that make us forget Krishna. If there be any action beyond the prescribed commandments which will remind you of Krishna, it is allowed, and prohibitions which will make you forget Krishna are prohibited. Without śaraṇāgati, there cannot be any bhakti. You are aware that there are six fold teachings of śaraṇāgati. I don't want to elaborate on this.

## Lord appears for His devotees

Mūrti-pūjā is permitted in sanātan dharma. There is a gulf of difference between mūrti- pūjā and idol worship. We are not idol worshippers. The Supreme Lord is the Supreme Person, Lord of all Lords. He is the Transcendental Spiritual Supreme Person. Personality is attributed to the conscious principle and not to unconscious matter. Nobody on earth considers a dead body to be a person. As long as consciousness, which has got thinking, feeling and willing, exists in the body, he is considered a person. If an atomic part of the conscious energy of the Supreme Lord is considered a person, what is the difficulty in understanding that He, Who has got Absolute Existence, Absolute Knowledge and Absolute Bliss (Complete Saccidānanda), is the Supreme Person. There is no reason for not accepting Him as the Supreme Person.

The root cause of the appearance of the Supreme Lord in this world is to remove extreme separation grief of the śuddha bhakta. There are numerous avataras, but Śrī Krishna is Original Bhagavān, as you have written, 'self-manifesting svayam Bhagavān'. Śrī Krishna appears in His Transcendental Spiritual Form by the pure devotion in a pure devotee. We have heard from our guruvarg that karma-kāṇḍa prāṇ pratiṣṭhā is not absolutely necessary. It will be better for you to worship the portraits of manifested Deities Śrī Guru Gaurāṅga Rādhā-Krishna, installed by a pure devotee. In that case, if you are unable to worship the Deity due to some physical or other kind of difficulty, there will be no serious offence because you can remember that the Deities are being worshipped in the temple where they are installed. In the case when deities are installed as per prescript of vaiṣṇava śāstra, worship of those deities must be done without fail, as per regulation of vaiṣṇava śruti, daily.

I have heard, Supreme Lord God willing, we may go to some places in Russia in the month of September. I shall have the opportunity to speak to you personally in detail.

We are leaving today for extensive preaching-tour in North-India with a big party. May All-Merciful Śrī Guru Gaurāṅga Rādhā-Krishna bless you.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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**Question to Śrīla Gurudev** - *Is it right for a householder devotee to abandon his mundane duties and just walk away to the forest even though his family members need his help (e.g., to enter into vānaprastha or sannyāsa)?*

## **Ātmā can go either side**

The Indian scriptures mention two paths - *pravṛttir eṣā bhūtānām nivṛttis tu mahā-phalā* - the path of worldly-mindedness and the path of renunciation. Conditioned souls are generally eligible for the path of worldly-mindedness. Persons eligible for the path of renunciation are very rare. When conditioned souls become averse to the worship of the Supreme Lord, they are enveloped by the external material potency consisting of three primal qualities— *sattvaḥ, rajaḥ* and *tamaḥ*. Living beings are created by *rajo-guṇa*, they are sustained for some time by *sattva-guṇa* and they are destroyed by *tamo-guṇa*. Conditioned souls have become victims of birth, death and the threefold afflictions. The real self (ātmā) originates from the marginal potency or, according to the Gītā, from the *parā-śakti* (internal spiritual potency). The ātmā is *aṇu-saccidānanda*, an entity of minute existence, knowledge and bliss. As the ātmā is the outcome of the marginal potency (a demarcating line between the internal potency and external potency), it can go to either side. When ātmās become averse to God by misusing their relative independence, they are enveloped by the external or

illusory energy. After eight million births in different species, they become human beings. In this body, God gives them the power to discriminate between eternal and non-eternal. They can accept the Eternal Reality, the Supreme Lord, and worship Him.

## **Incompetence should not lead to relinquishing**

Previously, in ancient times, varṇāśrama-dharma was prescribed according to quality and action. Four varṇas (brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya and śūdra) and four āśramas (brahmacārī, gr̥hastha, vānaprastha and sannyāsa) were introduced. This subject is very elaborate and scientific. It is not possible to have an elaborate discussion of it through letters. Many scriptural evidences are to be referred to. There is a gradual procedure to attain the highest spiritual stage.

Due to foreign invasions, the Indian scientific process of social enhancement was disturbed. The social systems are different in foreign countries so it is irrelevant to go into it in detail. Varṇāśrama-dharma is in vogue only in India. In Kaliyuga, varṇāśrama- dharma has deteriorated due to foreign influence.

Incompetent persons, finding difficulty after marriage to lead household life and to maintain family members, give up family life and thereby commit sin. Acceptance of sannyāsa is prohibited for them. There may be some exceptional cases. By providence, some fortunate persons may come in contact with bona fide sādhus and get a chance of developing the temperament for worshipping God and leading restricted lives.

In the third canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Kapila Bhagavān, in His instruction to mother Devahūti, talks about the original and concomitant qualities of a bona fide pure devotee (sādhu). He mentions that one of the original qualifications of a sādhu should be mat-kṛte tyakta-karmāṇas tyakta-svajana-bāndhavāḥ. Abandoning of varṇāśrama- dharma and relinquishing of bodily relations and

friends are allowed if it is for the propitiation of the Supreme Lord. If there is any other ulterior motive, such as to fulfill material desires, the abandoning of varṇāśrama duties and relations will be considered as a sinful act.

To attain actual knowledge of this, one should study the conversation between Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrī Rāya Rāmānanda in Kovur, South India, as narrated by Śrīla Kavirāja Goswāmī in Śrī Caitanya-Caritāmṛta.

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## **Nivritti mārg is not to be imparted**

There are two paths - pravritti mārg - path through married life (sva-varṇa-vivāha) and nivritti mārg (path through unmarried life— ascetic life). General people are eligible for pravriti mārg. Only persons who have made up their minds that they will never go to household life (worldly life) are competent to take the ascetic order.

Regarding your taking decision in your marriage, you are to seek advice from your parents. They know best your mental and physical status.

You should not wait for your decision whether in future you will accept married life or unmarried life; you should start bhajan immediately (chanting of Holy Name, etc., avoiding tenfold offences), because nobody knows when they will have to leave this world. When Śrīmad Raghunātha Dāsa Goswāmī became very eager to surmount this worldly ocean, Lord Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu pacified him at first, saying he should not become mad, but at present he should remain in his house with a restful mind. Nobody can surmount the ocean of births and



deaths all of a sudden, it will take time; gradually he can surmount it, and he should not try to outwardly show his indifference to worldly affairs, but inwardly he should practice abnegation and worship Śrī Krishna with sincerity. Śrī Krishna will rescue him from the pangs of worldly suffering in no time.

At this stage it is not advisable for you to accept nivritti mārg. Nivritti mārg is not something to be thrust upon anybody. It should be automatic and spontaneous. When there develops tremendous thirst for Śrī Krishna, you will not know how it will come, but abnegation from the world will be automatic then. It cannot be done by making prior programmes.

There is no such mandatory order of Lord Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu that while performing Harināma in household life, one must marry. Pravriti mārg is congenial for those who are unable to control their sensuous appetite but at the same time want to perform Hari bhajan. Those who are unable to control the senses should marry as per instruction of the scriptures, i.e., it should be sva-varṇa-vivāha, but they should strictly follow devotional rules - bhakti sadācār. There is no doubt that nivritti mārg is most effective and is definitely better than pravriti mārg, if one can afford to take this path.

One can perform uninterrupted bhajan in nivritti mārg. We should not do anything according to our emotions. We should accept nivritti mārg after deep thinking. Tremendous thirst for Śrī Krishna automatically inspires one to renounce this world. It should come from within. It is nothing to be forcibly imparted. At present you go on performing bhajan with one-pointed steadfast devotion. Śrī Krishna will guide you from within and show you the right path.

Those who want to devote themselves fully for Krishna bhajan accept nivritti mārg, so that there may not be any interruption in bhajan. Those who are unable to give up their desire for sensuous enjoyments but also want to do bhajan, accept pravriti mārg. If anybody wants to accept pravriti mārg he should do it at the right time and right age and in that case he should have to bear the trouble of

earning money.

If a jīva, by his previous eternal good deeds, wants to take absolute shelter at the Lotus Feet of Śrī Krishna and serve Him, greatest harm will be inflicted to him if he is obstructed to do this. We should not put hindrance to any jīva for their desire to serve Śrī Krishna. I think you will appreciate my position.

Every jīva reaps the fruits of their own actions. We get births, circumstances, environment and paraphernalia as per our own karma. Nobody is responsible for this. We have the right to do karma, but the fruits are controlled by Śrī Krishna. We should not be impatient. Gradually we can surmount the ocean of births and deaths.

We should go on chanting the holy names of Śrī Krishna, Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu and submit our prayers to them constantly. They will decide whether household life or ascetic life is congenial for us. Nothing is impossible for Śrī Krishna, Who is Omnipotent.

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**Question to Śrīla Gurudev** - *A devotee planning separation from his wife.*

## **Adjustments in family life**

We should always remember that we belong to Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu's school of thought. Chaitanya Mahāprabhu teaches us to love all human beings,

may even other living beings, seeing their eternal relation with our most beloved object of worship— the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna. If we, as followers of the teachings of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, cannot love our own persons, how can we love others?

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu teaches us to chant the Holy Name with the four qualities of being humbler than a blade of grass, more forbearing than a tree, giving respect to all and having no desire to get respect from others.

The devotees here have got great respect for your family and polite behaviour. This dignity should be retained at all costs. Worldly interests should not be allowed to harm eternal spiritual interests. You yourself, in introducing me used to say that this precious human birth was only meant for the service of Śrī Krishna and not for eating, sleeping, defending and mating. Sometimes in family love-relationships there may be a temporary expression of offended state of mind but it is usually not lasting.

Our Most Revered Gurudev used to advise us to remember the instructions of Prahlād Mahārāj, “yad vadanti yad icchanti cānumodeta nirmamaḥ” i.e. if anybody in the family says something or does something against one's liking, sometimes it is necessary to approve that but without attachment. In that case, we will not be responsible for the approval. For a peaceful family life, this sort of behaviour is necessary. One should think deeply about how Prahlād Mahārāj could stay in the most hostile atmosphere with a calm and serene mentality. He never became unbalanced and lost his calmness of mind. We should try to adjust ourselves with the environment; we cannot make the environment adjusted to us. Lord Chaitanya Mahāprabhu and our guruvarg repeatedly advise us to go through the holy biographies of Prahlād Mahārāj and Ambarīṣa Mahārāj. I think what I have heard is only a temporary expression of emotion. I am anxiously waiting to hear from you in regard to this at the earliest.

Kindly please remember daily the four Narasimha Mantras. May All-Merciful Śrī Guru Gaurāṅga bless you.

My love to you all.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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**Question to Śrīla Gurudev** - *I don't know how to actually and properly turn myself towards Śrī Krishna. I'm chanting his Holy name and also performing other devotional practices but still I'm unhappy. I also don't have any strength and courage to surrender fully to Śrī Krishna's lotus feet. I am now a householder and I'm very lazy and always reluctant to do any kind of practical work. Although I am formally employed in the company, I don't feel myself connected with that kind of work. What should I do now?*

## **Glow of the Holy Name**

Received your letter through email.

I was away from Calcutta during early January to participate in the Annual Functions of Mumbai and Centennial Function of Most Revered Gurudev at Kochi, Kerala (India). We have got four Maṭhs in Assam. I could not go last year to participate in the Annual Functions of those Maṭhs. This year also, I was advised not to undertake hectic-tour. I had been to Tezpur, North-East Assam area, by to and fro air-flight only to satisfy the devotees of Assam. Annual Function and sankīrtan procession function of Tezpur Gauḍīya Maṭh were grandly successful. Many persons came to Tezpur from different parts of Assam

and took Harinām and mantra dīkṣā. I returned here with two other devotees on 17th February, 2005. You heard about this in the Videoconference last Sunday.

You have expressed your heart feelings in your letter that you are always unhappy and in distress. The Supreme Lord is All-Bliss. Even a glow of the Holy Name of Śrī Krishna can destroy the sins of millions of births and even beyond that, can bestow emancipation. The sayings of the scriptures are not untrue. There must be some cause for which the votary is unable to get the objective. The aspirants should think about this very seriously. Every human being is reaping the fruits of his own actions, good or bad. Others are not the cause of the good and bad fruits, they are only instrumental. As we find in this world, the sun is giving light or heat to all without discrimination, so similarly the Supreme Lord is equal to all. He has got no enemy, no friend. But those who worship Him sincerely from the core of the heart, engaging all the sense-organs, mind and intellect for His service, they are for Him, and the Supreme Lord is also for them (Gītā, 9.29).

### **Sincere attempt is a must**

A conditioned soul, forgetting his relationship with the Supreme Lord, passed through numerous births and has now got the precious human birth. God has given human beings the discriminating power between good and bad, eternal and non- eternal. Conditioned souls have imbibed all the impressions of previous births and naturally they are under the influence of those impressions in this world. If anybody makes a bad habit, it becomes very difficult for him to change the habit. We are to practice in two ways as stated in the Gītā, 6.34,35 -

*cañcalaṁ hi manaḥ kṛṣṇa pramāthi balavad dṛḍham tasyāhaṁ nigrahaṁ manye  
vāyor iva su-duṣkaram*

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca*

*asaṁśayaṁ mahā-bāho mano durnigrahaṁ calam abhyāsenā tu kaunteya  
vairāgyeṇa ca grhyate*

The Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna acknowledges that it is very difficult to control the mind and sense-organs, but it is not impossible. It can be done by abhyāsa (repeated practice) and vairāgya. Significance of the word vairāgya has got two interpretations

- (1) practice of detachment from non-eternal things of this world and (2) the positive meaning, attachment to the Supreme Lord. As much attachment we shall have for Śrī Krishna Who is All-Existence, All-Knowledge and All-Bliss, so much detachment we shall have from non-eternal things of this world. Association of higher status sādhus is necessary to achieve success in these two ways of practice.

Sādhus can help us in our practice, but we should also make sincere effort to get the objective. If we try sincerely, God, His personal associates and the sādhus will come at our back. Always we should remember Yaśodā Devi's pastimes to fasten Krishna, Gopāl, but every time there were two fingers less of rope. One finger— His Grace, other finger— sincere desire to serve.

## **Engage in service**

As you are a family man, you should not remain in the house as an ascetic, completely indifferent to worldly affairs. You are a household devotee, you cannot beg. So it will be necessary for you to earn something. You should not engage yourself to earn huge money, but you should earn something to meet the minimum necessity. If you do it along with your mother, I think it will be better, because out of affection, mother will take care of you. You should not give much importance to martial art training, which you used to do earlier. All these will divert your mind. But for physical health, you may do some exercise as per

expert's advice. Nothing of this world will go with us. Only devotion to God will go with us.

Practice of nāma-sankīrtan is the best way in Kaliyuga. There is no other way better than this. You call Krishna from the core of the heart. Don't be idle in regard to this. Krishna, appearing in your heart, will remove all difficulties and gradually bestow you eternal bliss. With firm belief, go on doing this. Nobody can remain in this world completely idle. If you do not engage your sense organs, mind or intellect for the service of Krishna, they will be automatically engaged in other inferior things. The sense-organs will not sit idle. Actually Śrī Krishna is the owner of our body, subtle body and soul. So all should be engaged in His service.

My submission to your respected mother is to look after you for spiritual amelioration and for your day-to-day physical requirements as well as she would also look after me.

My love to you all. May All-Merciful Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga bless you.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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## **Lord's associates are transcendental**

Received your letter. I can remember that as per your desire, we had been to your house, where we had our afternoon program as well as prasāda. We were happy to see you and your husband's sincere desire to serve vaiṣṇavas and your

affectionate behaviour with us.

You are blessed as you have got the grace of one of the prominent personal associates of Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Goswāmī Ṭhākura and our Most Revered Śikṣā Guru, His Divine Grace Śrīmad Bhakti Promode Puri Goswāmī Mahārāj. The significance of the teachings of authentic scriptures and of the teachings of a transcendental personality, mahābhāgavat, descends to a completely surrendered soul. You will find evidence in regard to this in Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 6.23 'yasya deve parā bhaktir yathā deve tathā gurau...'. The Supreme Lord is Transcendental and His personal associates are also transcendental. So, naturally the significance of their teachings is beyond the comprehension of the sense-organs, mind and intellect of conditioned souls.

The purport of your letter as far as it is represented to me in English and as far as I have understood, manifests your sincere desire to worship Śrī Krishna and His devotees. Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna says in the Gītā, 6.40, 'na hi kalyāṇa-kṛt kaścid durgatiṁ tāta gacchati'. A sincere soul will never be deceived.

## **Servitorship is natural**

A śuddha bhakta, pure devotee, can never have the aptitude to enjoy or renounce. The Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna is the only Enjoyer and Master of all sacrifices. He is the only Puruṣa - Supreme Person. As we are not masters and enjoyers, we cannot enjoy or renounce. We are the parts of the potency of Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna, so naturally we are to be dominated by Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna.

Finite atomic animated beings of the world (jīvas), by the misuse of their relative independence, become averse to Śrī Krishna, are enveloped by the illusory energy of the Supreme Lord consisting of three primal qualities - Sattva, Rajas and Tamas - and are hurled down in this world. As they misconceive themselves



as enjoyers of this world, they pass through cycles of births and deaths and suffer severe threefold afflictions. An actual master can enjoy or give up. As jīvas are not masters, they cannot enjoy or give up. The spirit of enjoying and the spirit of giving up are unnatural. They are eternal servants; their only duty is to serve. An example may be given here of Indian family-life, which most western people may not understand. In India, when a chaste woman is married to a chaste man she, according to Indian social custom, belongs to her husband and even changes her family-descent from parents to husband. Husband is considered to be the owner of house, wealth and even his wife. If that wife prepares many good dishes for her husband from the articles belonging to the husband and after preparing good palatable dishes, says to the husband, “I am contributing these to you” then this sort of ego of contribution is wrong and will be ridiculous. Our gross body and subtle body, being the outcome of the material potency (aparā potency) of the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna, and our real self, being the outcome of the spiritual energy (parā Potency) of the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna, both belong to Śrī Krishna. As my potency works for me, Supreme Lord's potency will also work for Him. By serving Krishna with all His articles in a proper way, we can get the highest objective— Love for Śrī Krishna. So service of Krishna is natural and everything else is unnatural.

## **The actual owner**

Household devotees cannot remain completely indifferent to household affairs. Only a bona fide ascetic devotee can remain indifferent to worldly affairs. It is stated in the scriptures that, in general, the conditioned souls are suitable for household-life. Ascetic order of spiritual life is rare. However, in general, especially in India, women are not entitled to become ascetics because of their physical constitution. So while doing worship, female devotees should also give some energy to their relative duty of rearing a child. Household devotees, both men and women, should always think that the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna is the actual owner of the house, husband, wife and children. All family members are only the servitors of Śrī Krishna.

Even Ambarīṣa Mahārāj, who was such a great devotee that even the formidable saint Durvasa Ṛṣi's curse could not touch him, could only remove all worldly desires gradually. We cannot get the objective all of a sudden. It depends upon our intensity and sincerity of sādhan.

I am awfully busy here in attending religious functions in different places in North- India. I shall return to Calcutta from Bombay on 26th January, 2002 to attend the Annual Function of Calcutta Maṭh.

May Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna bestow you eternal peace— 'Ya molus boguo vichnom wasem vlage'

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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## **Krishna is the only maintainer**

Our Most Revered Gurudev often used to say that birth, death and marriage are not in the hands of the human beings. They are controlled by the Supreme Lord. Parents have the duty to perform arrangement of marriage, but the fruits are controlled by the Supreme Lord. Nowadays it is difficult to find a suitable match for a devotee girl, but you should not stop trying. Actually we have our eternal real relationships with Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna. All the relations in this world are temporary and perishable. As you are all worshippers of Krishna, your daughter has got no difficulty to worship Krishna in whatever relation she likes.

Devotees should have this sort of firm belief that Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna is the only maintainer and sustainer. I am a conditioned soul with hundreds of drawbacks, what can I do to mitigate your worries? I can submit my prayer to Guru, Vaiṣṇava and Bhagavān to bless you all.

My love to you all.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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## **The dog's tail**

Received your letters by hand and by e-mail.

Lust is the heart disease of all conditioned souls of the world. Our Most Revered Gurudev used to give an illustration of the dog. If the tail of the dog is made straight by pulling, the tail of the dog will return to its curled state, when the pulling is stopped. In a similar manner, at the time of associating with sādhus, we think we have become alright but the moment we give up the company of the sādhus, we forget everything and we come to the same state as we were before. It is a long journey; we cannot get the desired fruit all of a sudden. As Rūpā Goswāmī has said in the Upadeśāmṛta – “Without earnestness, firm belief that Krishna will surely grace us, patience, practicing devotional service, disassociating from non-sādhus and accepting scriptural prescripts, we cannot get success in our devotional spiritual life.” In your worldly life also, if you lose patience, you cannot succeed. So for spiritual amelioration, immense patience is necessary.

Chaitanya Mahāprabhu advised the household devotees first, “You do Harinām, you serve vaiṣṇavas and worship Deities”. But when household devotees again asked what they will do after going back to their home. Chaitanya Mahāprabhu advised them, “You do Harinām and serve vaiṣṇavas”, without mentioning about worship of Deities. It is true that householders, for their entanglement with worldly things, should worship Deities for engaging their sense-organs in service of the Deities. Worship of installed Deities should be performed without offence. A householder should think seriously before installing Deities, whether they will be able to worship Deities without offence and can continue the seva-pūjā. You can worship portraits of Guru-Vaishnavas- Bhagavān, where there is less possibility of committing offence.

More when we meet. Hope this will find you in good health and spirits. My love to you all.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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## **One-pointed devotion**

Household devotees, who have got attachment for family members, very often become victims to inducements detrimental to their spiritual life. If the family members, who have not accepted the pure devotional cult, insist on restoring the pūjā of kuladevi (family deity) let them do it; it will not be wise to oppose them. But we should be firm in ananya bhakti (one-pointed exclusive devotion).

It is learnt from \_\_\_\_\_, that you may go to Agartala with us. Now you are not a free man; there are household obligations and duties. You should not be disheartened if there is any hindrance.

I am too much engaged here in writing articles for Śrī Chaitanya Vani monthly magazine and seeing proofs, as I shall be away from Calcutta for a long period.

We are so so. My love to you all. May All-Merciful Śrī Guru, Śrī Gaurāṅga and Śrī Rādhā-Krishna bless you all.

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**Question to Śrīla Gurudev** - *I sorely miss your divine association. I feel I have lost even everything spiritual since my separation with my wife. Some time ago I told you that my japamāla had been stolen. Would it be possible for you to give a japamāla that you had chanted on? I feel like everything I do and think is mere hypocrisy and need to feel something more real some, more genuine, not show bottle devotion.*

## **Separation inevitable from mundane relations**

Our physical relations in this world are extremely transitory. Any moment these relations may be finished. This body has birth, so death is inevitable. Separation is inevitable, nobody can avoid it. Real self is eternal, so one's relation with the Eternal Supreme Lord is real and eternal. Whatever we see in this world, and all temporary relations, are due to our being enveloped by the illusory energy of the

Supreme Lord. As long as we are in the grip of the external potency consisting of three primal qualities - Sattva, Rajah and Tamah - remembrance of our eternal relation with the Supreme Lord is enveloped. We have got false egos, false relations, and false interests and are burning in the fire of clashing of false interests. No conditioned soul can stop it. Only a bona fide surrendered soul can be rescued from the clutches of Māyā. Krishna has said in the Gītā (7.14) clearly, “daivī hy eṣā guṇa-mayī mama māyā duratyayā, mām eva ye prapadyante māyām etāṁ taranti te”— A surrendered soul will be rescued from the clutches of Māyā. By the fruit we can understand whether we have actually surrendered or not. A śuddha bhakta has got love for Krishna (causeless exclusive devotion to Śrī Krishna) and love for all living beings in this world. He always sees Krishna and all living beings related to Krishna. He does not see that there exists anybody in this world as his enemy. By the Lord's grace we have got this precious human birth only for worship of Śrī Krishna and not for worldly non-eternal interests. Any moment we may lose this chance. So, we should utilise our valuable time only for the service of Śrī Krishna and for nothing else.

As per your desire, I shall send one Japamāla to you, thinking it to be the desire of Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna and His Grace-incarnate Form Śrīla Gurudev, as well as my śikshā guru Śrīmad Bhaktivedanta Swāmi Mahārāj. I am a conditioned soul. I have got many drawbacks, no foresight, no hindsight. How can I pose to be guru? I only try to abide by your desire and send you japamāla. It is my prayer to you, please put the māla on the lotus hands of the portrait of your gurudev Parampujyapad Śrīmad Bhaktivedanta Swāmi Mahārāj by paying prostrated obeisances, praying for his blessings and do japam.

Supreme Lord, Who is All-Good, willing, I hope to come in contact with you anywhere in . Hope this will find you all in good health and spirit.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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**Question to Śrīla Gurudev** - *Since 1991 I have been chanting 16 mālās of Harinām daily. My wife also got attracted to this philosophy but later in 1999 she had become disappointed and had given up devotional practice. All my attempts to inspire her failed. Now we live separately without officially divorcing. I took care of my 2 children as it was my duty. Now, by the mercy of Śrī Bhagavān, You and vaiṣṇavas I am living in an āśram. I have one problem regarding the mālā given by you. One day it came undone and I, not knowing that all the beads must be in a strict sequence, stringed them in a wanton order. What am I to do now?*

## **Parents' behaviour influences the children**

According to Indian scriptural injunction, there are two paths of spiritual life - worldly family life and life of renunciation. Generally people are eligible for worldly life. Illicit connection with women is prohibited. If they are to go to household life, they should marry according to scriptural injunction - only to get children. Parents should be very careful in their behaviour after begetting children. Their behaviour will have influence upon the children. The difficulty is this – the Indian way of marriage is not prevalent in western countries. According to Indian scriptural prescript, if the parents, after marriage, beget children and do not do their duty of bringing up the children, it is a kind of sin. After begetting children, both father and mother have the duty to maintain children and try to do whatever is beneficial to them.

By creating human beings, the Supreme Lord is satisfied because human beings have the discriminating power between good and bad, eternal and non-eternal. Other creatures have got no such conscience or discriminating power. It is not good for the parents to remain indifferent to children. Children have got no capacity to be reared without the help of parents.

Human birth is not meant for eating, sleeping, defending and mating like animals and birds. Household devotees should not move like ascetics. They should worship remaining in the household. We should have firm faith in our Object of worship, Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna - He is the sustainer and maintainer. You should try to do your duty always taking shelter at the Lotus Feet of the Supreme Lord sincerely from the heart. The Supreme Lord is maintaining infinite planets; He has got no difficulty to maintain you and your children.

## **Crossing the unsafe region**

I have heard about starting of one āśram at Minsk or near Minsk, Belarus. It will be convenient for the devotees to perform devotional service in such a congenial place. You have written that your wife was at first congenial to devotion but now she has given up everything. Conditioned souls pass through millions of species. Now, although he or she has got human birth, previous impressions of good and bad deeds may come to them and envelope them. Good and bad thoughts are flowing in their hearts. A sincere soul who wants eternal welfare should suppress the flow of bad thoughts and should increase the flow of good thoughts. Spiritual practice means struggle. When good thoughts predominate then one has crossed the unsafe region. It is my hope, if your wife gets association of superior vaiṣṇavas, her mind will be changed. You should remember you cannot get spiritual eternal welfare and also cannot get so called material gain by your own capability. Take absolute shelter of Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna and His devotees and become peaceful. Prahlād Mahārāj was completely surrounded by the anti-devotional demoniac persons but he never became unbalanced or gave up bhajan because of his absolute reliance on the Lotus Feet of his guru Nārada Goswāmī and Supreme Lord Śrī Narasimha Deva. Go through the holy life of Prahlād Mahārāj narrated in the seventh canto of Bhāgavatam.

You should remember four Narasimha mantras while going to bed and just after rising up from the bed and also if possible remember Narasimha Deva,



Panchatattva and Mahāmantra before going to do something at daytime. By remembrance of Narasiṃha Deva, Panchatattva and Mahāmantra, disturbance of demoniac creatures and all troubles will be removed. But you should do it sincerely with firm faith.

During the time of giving Mahāmantra, I have instructed everybody including you, how to do Mahāmantra on the beads. You should not cross 'Sumeru' of the mālā. Take advice in regard to this from any elevated devotee. You should know that to cross Sumeru is a kind of offence. You should also know how to count the beads. If any kind of offence is committed out of mistake, atonement is to take shelter of Harinām and pray for His mercy. Whatever you do, you should do with sincerity. Krishna has said emphatically, a sincere soul will never be deceived.

May All-Merciful Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga Rādhā-Krishna bless you. My love to you all.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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**Question to Śrīla Gurudev** - *I am going to start a process of changing my legal name to my sannyās name. For this, the process requires me to go along with my former wife to the government authorities few times. In all those instances I can take my brother or some other man with me, so that I don't have to be alone with my former wife. Can I do so?*

**Cannot go back**

In India, after taking tridaṇḍa sannyās, one cannot go back to one's non-eternal relations, wife, children etc. A sannyāsī becomes totally dissociated from all non- eternal relations. From brahmacarya āśram, one can go back to the household life by taking permission from gurudev, but not from sannyās āśram. From brahmacarya āśram, after entering gṛhastha āśram, a befitting person can give up family relations and take the order of vānaprastha. He is then vanachāri and not brahmachāri. After taking the last āśram, sannyās, there is no provision of coming back to household life. If any sannyāsī, giving up sannyās, returns to his previous household life that will be considered as a spiritual fall.

The social and religious system in foreign countries is totally different from India. So, a foreign devotee, after considering all these points and also their obligations in their countries, should take steps accordingly. It is not good to give advice from here.

## **Precious human birth**

Conditioned souls pass through cycles of births and deaths, so naturally they have got their previous non-eternal impressions of non-eternal material relations. After passing through 80 lakhs of species, a conditioned soul luckily gets the precious human birth. God has given discriminating power in human birth to know what is good and what is bad, what is eternal and non-eternal, etc. So human beings are eligible to worship the Supreme Lord, Who is All-Existence, All-Knowledge and All- Bliss.

A novice who starts bhajan is always in the tug of war between attraction to worldly things and attraction to spiritual culture. Nobody can get the realised state all of a sudden. It depends upon the intensity of sincerely practicing devotion to the Supreme Lord. As much we can increase our eternal devotional impressions in our heart, to that extent we can detach ourselves from our attraction to non-eternal relations and non- eternal impressions. Even Ambarīṣa Mahārāj, who was a great devotee, could only conquer all worldly desires gradually.

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## **Submit to Lord's will**

I am sorry to learn that your grandmother suddenly expired on 25th October. It is natural when one of the kith and kin expires, other members of the family suffer agony for this and I feel very much for his or her separation. But Lord Krishna says in the Gītā, "That which has its birth, will have its death. We should not mourn for that which is inevitable." Nobody will remain in this world eternally. Everybody will have to leave this world either today or tomorrow.

Your grandmother has taught you that this body will perish one day, and that we should immediately prepare ourselves for emancipation from the bondage of Māya to get Absolute Bliss. We wrongly think that parents, children and relatives are ours but nobody in this world is ours. Wrongly thinking that relatives are ours, we become attached to them and get afflictions. They have not come by our will and they will not go by our will. By the Lord's will they have come and by the Lord's will they will go. Actually they belong to the Lord. Forgetfulness of our eternal relationship with the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna is the root cause of our bondage and afflictions. We should submit to Him wholeheartedly and remember Him under all circumstances.

I am severely shocked to learn from that your son met with an accident and died. It is always painful for the parents to bear the separation of a son. Accidental deaths cause severe shocks which are very difficult to be endured. Time is the only healing factor.

## **Cycle of karma**

Śrī Vāsudeva and Śrī Devaki Devi, who had the great fortune to get the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna as their son, had to bear the terrible shock of the deaths of their six sons murdered one by one by Kāṁsa. They are, or they were, most sacred souls. We do not find any sufficient reasons why they had to suffer rude shocks. Actually, they did not feel the shocks as severely as we think, because they understood that mundane relations are very transitory and all jīvas reap the fruits of their own actions. As long as they have the fruits of their actions in this world, they remain in this world. When the fruits of actions end, they are to leave this world and go to a separable place. That last day may come by any kind of mishap - maybe accident, fever, heart disease, etc. We shall have to tolerate that for which there is no remedy. It is written in the scriptures that the six sons of Vāsudeva and Devaki Devi had such karma in their previous births that they were to be murdered by Kāṁsa in their next birth. This cycle of karma is going on for everyone.

## **Mourn for forgetting relation with the Lord**

Mundane relations are not actual relations; worldly relations are always changeable. We have our actual relationship with the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna. Actually we should mourn for forgetting our relationship with the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna, Who is really our dearest.

As per the desire of Śrī Krishna, jīvas have births and deaths, so they come and go. We falsely think them to be our own. A time will come when the whole universe will perish and the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna will take away all the jīvas. Nobody can resist His Absolute Will. So, it is always wise to submit to the Absolute Will of the Absolute Pūrṇa, Who is All Good.

Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna teaches us in the Gītā that we should not mourn for that which is inevitable. He who is born will die one day.

Take absolute shelter in Śrī Gurudev and the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna and go on chanting the Holy Name of Śrī Krishna. Chanting of the Holy Name will remove the pains of your heart and give you solace. I have got no words to pacify you.

May All- Merciful Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna bestow peace to the departed soul.

## **Suffering is like a dream**

We never dreamt that we would be deprived of the company of so soon and so suddenly. He was well reputed in all our Maṭhs in India and Bangladesh for his devotion to Śrī Gurudev and marvellous preaching work in Punjab. Everybody is mourning his sudden demise and we have been receiving many letters from different persons. There is no other way but to submit to the Will of the Supreme Lord and bear the pangs of separation. His sudden demise is a notice to us to prepare ourselves for getting emancipation from the cycle of births and deaths and attaining love of Śrī Krishna because at any moment we may die and lose this valuable chance.

We are forced to tolerate that for which there is no remedy. The born will die and the dead will be born. Lord Śrī Krishna forbids us to mourn for that which is inevitable. Prārabdha-karma-nirvāṇo nyapatat pāñca-bhautikaḥ. When the fruits of karma which have started come to an end, this body will perish. This end may come through disease, accident, etc., but all these are instrumental. Jīvas come and go by the Will of Śrī Krishna, but out of nescience we think them to be ours and we suffer due to attachment. Nobody comes and goes by our desire.

When jīvas become averse to Śrī Krishna, His illusory energy envelops them and they are drowned in the ocean of births and deaths and the threefold afflictions. We wrongly think ourselves to be the body and that other bodies related to us are

ours. Actually we are of Śrī Krishna and He is ours. There is no existence of suffering. This is like a dream. When we forget our relationship with Śrī Krishna, we become a victim of suffering. A realised soul has constant remembrance of Śrī Krishna, so he is beyond this dream.

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**Question to Śrīla Gurudev** - *Three Vedic astrologers and a western astrologer looked at the horoscope of my 13 year old son and predicted differently. But all those predictions scare me. My Gurudev is not replying to me. You kindly advise.*

## **Horoscope – reading**

Your main subject in the letter is regarding the horoscope of your 13 year old son. You have written observations of three Vedic astrologers and one western astrologer. It is further written that your revered Gurudev did not reply to your letter, which may be due to his busy schedule and health condition. It will be good for you to approach your Gurudev directly and take his advice.

As my experience goes in respect of such horoscopes— in many cases astrologers vary in their observations. It is also true, observation or prediction may change by actions in different modes and in higher ages. So you are not to be worried for this. By bhajan and doing harinām, all obstacles can be removed and all good fruits can be achieved. Performance of śuddha-bhakti will bestow upon the performer eternal welfare.

May all-merciful Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga, Rādhā-Krishna bless you and your child.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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**Question to Śrīla Gurudev** - *My husband is seriously ill. I am very worried. What should I do?*

### **Actual and real relation**

The living beings in this world have their actual and real relation with the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna. Relationships in this world are apparent. Conditioned souls of this world are passing through numerous births and deaths being enveloped by the illusory energy of the Supreme Lord. The fruits of the actions of conditioned souls, which have started, will have their end. Then nobody can remain in this world. Śrī Krishna says in the Gītā, “The wise do not mourn for the going and coming of the conditioned souls”. The only way of doing eternal benefit to other conditioned souls is to worship Śrī Krishna with pure devotion. If God is satisfied, all will be satisfied.

You are doing your duty to your husband sincerely. What further can you do? I think you are duly remembering Narasimha mantra. Bhagavān Narasimha Deva can remove all obstacles - obstacles of the world, as well as obstacles of devotion.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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**Question to Śrīla Gurudev** - *I would like to inform you that my wife is in poor health condition and is currently very sick. She will need to go for another scope operation in her esophageal to repair the necessary swelling. I am praying every moment to Śrī Narasimha to protect her and to relieve her suffering. I just thought I should let you know and hope that you can give her all the blessings.*

### **Human birth - more congenial than a demigod's**

I am very much worried to know the serious deteriorated condition of the health of your wife. I had heard about her liver disease, but now it has become very acute. You have taken immediate steps for her proper treatment. Now she is a bit better. She is admitted in the hospital and the doctor has said she will need an operation. It is good that you are praying to Narasimha Bhagavān. It will be better if you utter 4 hymns of Narasimha Bhagavān, each 4 times in the morning and at the time of going to bed and with it also, 4 times Panchatattva and Mahāmantra.

Our stay in this world is very short. After passing through 8 millions of births of different species, we have received this precious human birth. This birth is very rare. After passing through immense sufferings due to numerous births, we have this human birth and God has given human beings the discriminating power between eternal and non- eternal, so they can worship the Supreme Lord Rādhā-Krishna. Births of aquatic animals, immobile living beings, worms, birds and beasts and even the birth of demigods are not congenial for worship of the Supreme Lord. One of the great saints of West India has instructed human beings thus - “O beloved brothers and sisters! Utter the Holy Name of Krishna immediately; you will be able to crossover the ocean of births and deaths. There



is no guarantee that you can get a human birth again. If you do not worship Krishna, ultimately you will have to seriously repent. When you were born, you did not bring anything from your previous birth and at the time of death you are to leave this world empty-handed. Wealth, property - nothing will go with you. Your connection with the world will be finished one day. Having attained this human birth, start doing Harinām.”

I have heard your wife is a disciple of my śikṣā guru Parampujyapad Śrīmad Bhakti Kusum Śramaṇ Goswāmī Mahārāj. So she has got spiritual relationship with us. Always remember the pithy saying, 'Back to home and back to Godhead'.

May all merciful Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga Rādhā-Krishna bless your wife and bestow you strength to do your duty.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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**Question to Śrīla Gurudev** - *My son is not interested in his job, I am worried about my son, how he will maintain his family, because his wife also quit her job. But this situation must be solved. I now submit my question to your Lotus Feet. Please tell me what I should do to help my son and myself.*

**Householders should take responsibility**

It is the inherent nature of the mother to have love for her children. Children have the natural liberty to demand many things from their mother. It is very difficult to change the inherent mutual nature of the relation. The child is born from your womb, so how is it possible for you to behave unaffectionately and strongly. As the child is serving under the mother, this service will not be at par with his behaviour to bosses of outside companies.

As your child is grown up and educated, he should understand that he is not an ascetic; he is a household devotee and also married. He has got his duty towards parents as well as to his wife. He is not a mendicant, he cannot beg. He is to earn money to meet the expenses of the house. In future his mother won't be able to serve the company as she is doing now, due to old age. So it will be wise for the child to try to lessen your burden. There is no need of earning much money because such desire has got no end. At least that which is necessary for livelihood, you both are to earn that requirement. Otherwise the whole family will be in trouble in future. Household devotees must depend on their minimum earnings. If they become indifferent to this, more problems will be created in the family. Household devotees cannot perform worship like ascetics. They are to spend energy for worldly affairs also.

As your son is under you, he has got less difficulty. If he goes to an outside company to do work, he will have to spend much more time for earning money and will find it difficult to adjust with the environment. It is good for him that he is working under you. You are worried to see your son not at par with the qualification of a responsible person and thinking about his future. As he is educated, I am sure he will understand this drawback and take responsibility conferred to him by the company and give relief to you.

May All Merciful Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga bless you all. My love to you all.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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**Question to Śrīla Gurudev** - *In 2001 my daughter got Harinām, and in 2004, dīkṣā from Your Divine Grace. She is going to graduate from the art college, therefore she couldn't come with us now for Śrī Vrajamaṇḍal parikrama. In the end of December the devotees from my country informed me that she fell in asat-sanga. She wants to leave the place of devotees and wants to rent some flat together with her boy-friends from college. I am very worried for her. All devotees are also worried. My son and I are writing long letters to her, in attempt to help her at this critical time. Guru Mahārāj, if it is possible, please write something to her. Hari- katha will save her, I am hopeful of this.*

## **Devotees do not use force**

Received your letter written in your mother tongue translated into English and subsequently sent by email.

I have gone through your letter and I am sorry that although you remain here in Calcutta, you cannot express your heart to me due to language difficulty and at present also there is no person here who can interpret your thoughts in English to me.

It is true that by the grace of the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna you could participate in Śrī Vrajamaṇḍal parikrama with your son. Without the approval of Śrī Krishna, nothing can happen. I had been to \_\_\_\_\_ several times by the desire of Supreme Lord and was happy to get the company of the devotees there. My undertaking a journey outside India is not allowed now because of my health condition.

The Supreme Lord does not interfere in the relative independence of the conditioned souls. Real self is ātmā, who thinks, feels and wills. Nobody on earth considers a dead body to be a person. As long as consciousness exists in it, it is considered a person. If the Supreme Lord exerts His power forcibly to make the conditioned souls inclined to Him then the real self will be reduced to an inert thing. For that reason the Supreme Lord resides in the heart of the conditioned soul as the indwelling monitor, Paramātmā, also appearing in this world in different Transcendental Divine Forms and sending His own personal associates in this world to persuade the conditioned souls so that they can willingly submit to Him. You should go through the biography of the great devotee saint Prahlād Mahārāj. Prahlād Mahārāj tried his best to change the mind of his son Virochan to worship the Supreme Lord, but in spite of his best efforts he failed and his son became a demon. But Prahlād Mahārāj did not become unbalanced, thinking that due to Virochan's previous bad impressions imbibed by previous bad deeds, he could not accept his teachings. Prahlād Mahārāj thought he had done his duty for the eternal welfare of the son but the son could not accept it due to his previous bad impressions. Since the Supreme Lord and His powerful personal associates do not perform the pastimes of using force to change the mind of the worldly people, how can we do it? It is our duty to help the enslaved jīvas by our ideal character to change their mind so that they can submit to the Supreme Lord and worship Him. But we should not make a firm determination to execute it because in case our desire is not fulfilled, we may become unstable.

## **Mental diversion will be a setback**

There exist two kinds of paths - (1) the path of eternal welfare and (2) the path for sensuous enjoyment. In this prison house world, almost 999 in 1000 are in the group of the path of sensuous enjoyment. You may get a few eligible persons for the path of eternal welfare. In the beginning of this path at the time of restraining sense-organs etc., it may seem to be like poison but its ultimate consequence will be ambrosia or nectar. In the path of enjoyment, at first it seems to be like ambrosia but the consequence will be virulent poison. Most

fortunate aspirants accept the path of eternal welfare.

The specialty of human birth is the capacity of discriminating between bad and good, eternal and non-eternal. God has given this precious human birth for worship of Him and not for eating, sleeping, defending and mating like birds and beasts. In that sense your daughter is lucky enough to have accepted the spiritual eternal path. Mental diversion for non-eternal sensuous enjoyments for her will be a setback. Everyone who accepts the path of enjoyment ultimately repents severely. But then it may be too late. All the conditioned souls are running after enjoyments - for pleasure of ears, eyes, tongue and organs of smell and touch. When a conditioned soul becomes averse to Śrī Krishna, he comes in contact with the illusory energy and thinks all material enjoyments are his requirement. The eye organ is very strong in insects. Being attracted by the dazzling light of fire, they jump into it to enjoy but are burnt and destroyed. Ignorant unfortunate persons only run after sensuous enjoyment by hook or crook, not thinking of its venomous consequence. The actual existence of all rūpa (beauty), rasa (taste), śabda (sweet sound), sparśa (sweet touch) and gandha (sweet smell), is in the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna. The conditioned souls are actually running after the shadow of Śrī Krishna, māyā, and ultimately their lives are frustrated. A real votary should be alert of his ultimate target of life— causeless devotion to Śrī Krishna.

May All-Merciful Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga bless you all.

'Ya molus' Bogu' o vichnom vashem blage'

My love to you all.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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**Question to Śrīla Gurudev – A devotee in financial difficulty.**

## **Extremely poor but happy**

Received your letter and noted the contents. I am worried knowing your difficulties. This world is the prison-house for the conditioned souls of the world. They are all under the grip of threefold afflictions - ādhyātmik (mental and physical miseries), ādhibhautik (afflictions inflicted by other living beings) and ādhidaivik (natural calamities), as well as suffering tremendously at the time of birth and death.

The Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna has said in the Gītā (7.14), 'daivī hy eṣā guṇa-mayī mama māyā duratyayā mām eva ye prapadyante māyām etām taranti te' - 'It is extremely difficult for the conditioned souls to cross over the ocean of births and deaths and threefold afflictions due to their entanglement in the snare of Māyā, the external potency consisting of three primeval qualities— sattva, raja and tama. Only the souls completely surrendered to the Lotus Feet of the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna can be delivered from the shackles of Māyā.' We are to remember the six-fold teachings of 'śaraṇāgati' - 'ānukūlasya saṅkalpaḥ prātikūlya-vivarjanam, rakṣiṣyātīti viśvāso goptṛtve varaṇam tathā, ātma-nikṣepa-kārpaṇye ṣaḍ-vidhā śaraṇāgatiḥ' - We are to accept that which is congenial and give up that which is not congenial for worship of Krishna; we should have firm faith that He is the only sustainer and protector; we are to dedicate ourself totally to the Lotus Feet of Krishna; and be humble by giving up all false material egos.

There are many instances of household devotees being in extreme poverty, but still happy - Vidura and Vidura's wife, Śrīdhara pandit (personal associate of

Chaitanya Mahāprabhu), Sudāmā Brāhmaṇa, the friend of Krishna etc.

*ananyāś cintayanto mām ye janāḥ paryupāsate teṣāṃ nityābhiyuktānām yoga-kṣemaṃ vahāmy aham*

(Bhagavad Gītā 9.22)

'My devotees always have one-pointed devotion to Me, they are fully engaged in My service. For the maintenance of the body, they accept everything which is not anti- devotional. They dedicate everything to me, so I give them their requirements and maintain them.

Krishna has emphatically said, 'na hi kalyāṇa-kṛt kaścid durgatim tāta gacchati' (Gītā 6.40) - A sincere soul will never be deceived. Also Krishna has said in the Gītā (2.47), 'karmaṇy evādhikāras te mā phaleṣu kadācana' - The conditioned souls have got the right to do good and bad deeds but the Supreme Lord is controlling the fruits of their actions. So the wise never blame others for their difficulties.

If you are badly in need of some money for the treatment of your parents, I shall give to you. Supreme Lord willing, I may go to our Puri Maṭh to participate in the Annual Function on the occasion of Ratha-Yatra and will return on 9th July, 2005. I am so so. Hope this will find you all in good health and spirit.

May All-Merciful Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga Rādhā-Krishna bless you all.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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**Question to Śrīla Gurudev** - *I was thinking about quitting my job before coming to Vrajamaṇḍal parikrama in October this year. Another idea is that I could open some shop with Indian articles. We are thinking to associate with GOKUL here. Now I feel that the only way that I would find fulfillment in my life is to dedicate myself fully for Your purpose, to become Your instrument in fulfilling the desires of Śrī Guruvarg and our Lordships.*

## **Practice Śikṣāṣṭaka sincerely**

Received your letter sent through e-mail. I am glad to go through the contents of your letter, knowing that you are very much eager to serve guru, vaiṣṇava and Rādhā-Krishna.

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu appeared in this very Kaliyuga of Vaivasvata Manvantar by taking the form and mood of worship of Rādhārāṇī, principally to taste the sweetness of the Supreme Lord Krishna and simultaneously to distribute Krishna- prema to all, irrespective of caste, creed and religion. He is the Highest Munificent Form of Godhead. Although He is the Supreme Lord, He takes the Form of a devotee to teach others how to love Krishna by practicing Himself. So it is very essential to go through His teachings, 'Śikṣāṣṭaka'. A sincere servitor always tries to satisfy his object of worship. During Vrajamaṇḍal parikrama, devotees will go through His teachings throughout the month of Kārtik-vratā. A votary, to satisfy Chaitanya Mahāprabhu and the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna, should at least practice the first and third verses of Śikṣāṣṭaka sincerely from the core of the heart. Chaitanya Mahāprabhu has taught in the first verse, mainly seven principal attainments or more correctly all attainments while doing Śrī Rādhā-Krishna sankīrtan. Sankīrtan means to perform kīrtan without tenfold offences; to perform kīrtan completely i.e. to sing His Name, Form, Attributes, Personal Associates, Pastimes and also in the company of bona fide śuddha bhaktas. For doing sankīrtan without the tenfold offences, you are to go through the third verse of Śikṣāṣṭakam - to be humbler than a blade of grass,



more forbearing than a tree, to give respect to all thinking that your object of worship is residing in their hearts and not to have the desire to get respect from others. Everything depends upon practice; merely by speaking we cannot get the desired fruit. We are to examine ourselves whether we are actually following the teachings of Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. The actual follower will surely get the highest object, Rādhā- Krishna prema. Service means to engage all sense-organs (gross and subtle) and all efforts for Guru-Vaishnav-Bhagavān.

*sarvopādhi-vinirmuktaṁ tat-paratvena nirmalam hṛṣīkeṇa hṛṣīkeśa-sevanam  
bhaktir ucyate*

(Chaitanya Charitāmṛta Madhya 19.170)

One can serve Krishna only after being completely free from mundane egos, gross and subtle, and acquiring the knowledge that the aspirant is of Him.

I am aware that GOKUL (Global Organisation of Krishnachaitanya's Universal Love) Institution is registered at \_\_\_\_\_. So, it will be good if there be any activity of the institution. After taking mantra, it is necessary for the votary to perform the devotional forms of hearing and chanting of the glories of Krishna. I have heard that you have solemnised the Centennial Function of our gurudev. A report of it should be sent here for publication in our monthly magazine, Śrī Chaitanya Vāṇi.

We are to submit to the Will of the Supreme Lord, Who is all-good. Whatever is done by His Will, is for the benefit of all. By the Lord's desire, I am now confined here in India and doctors have advised me not to undertake a hectic tour, but if the Supreme Lord Krishna desires, I may have the opportunity to participate in the Vrajamaṇḍal parikrama celebration.

Regarding your job, you should consult with your husband, mother-in-law, and if necessary, other experienced people and take decision.

May All-Merciful Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga bless you all. My love to you all.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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**Question to Śrīla Gurudev** - *Can a devotee work in a medicine factory where animal products are treated and there is apprehension of bad smell etc?*

## **Animal products in medicines**

There is risk of contamination by animal propensity when using such animal product drugs. That contamination may spoil our mind whether we take directly or even are in contact indirectly.

Previously in India, treatment for all kinds of diseases was done by drugs from herbs or trees with very effective results. However due to alien influence in India for hundreds of years, there is now a lack of knowledge of different herbs and Ayurvedic treatment has diminished. Western type systems of treatment are prevailing now which are more inclined to use animal products in the manufacturing of medicines. If they can use Ayurvedic medicine it will be better.

We are enslaved jīvas. We already have an innate propensity of taking animal products. Therefore any further contact with it will be derogatory to spiritual upliftment. Even on an Ekādaśī tithi, for a critical illness, medicine containing animal product is not allowed to be taken.

Conversely, I have seen in newspapers that people in western countries have started preferring a vegetarian diet. The number of people taking to vegetarianism is increasing as they have started believing that a non-vegetarian diet is the cause of many diseases.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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## PART 7 Spreading the Message of Lord Chaitanya

In my opinion it will not be beneficial for our devotional spiritual elevation if we do prachār (preaching) for prachār's sake. The purpose of preaching should not be to rectify others. All forms of bhajan including kīrtan should be performed for the propitiation of Śrī Krishna and His devotees. If we can correct ourselves, then preaching will be automatic.

**Question to Srila Gurudev** - *The mission of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is known as a preaching movement. Should devotees of all stages of advancement participate in preaching? Can they contribute in the religious and spiritual advancement of the living entities in general?*

### The rescuer of all vile sinners

Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur, our original spiritual guide, is the writer of the lyrical poem called 'Kalyan Kalpataru' (beneficial wish-yielding tree). At the outset, I want to remember a portion of the teachings of one song of Kalyan Kalpataru which is applicable to me:

(1)

ami to' durjana ati sada duracar

koti koti janme mor nahiko uddhar

(2)

e heno doyalu kebae jagate ache

emata pamare uddhariya la'be kache?

(3)

suniyachi, sri-caitanya patita-pavana

ananta-pataki jane korila mocana

(4)

emata doyar sindhu krpa bitariya

kabe uddharibe more sri-caranan diya?

'I am a villainous person, always indulging in nasty abominable practices. Surely I won't be rescued in my millions and millions of births. Where is such a merciful person in this world to come to rescue and embrace this vile sinner? I have heard that Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is the rescuer of all vile sinners. He is the Most Munificent Form of Godhead. He has delivered infinite fallen souls. Will Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, by His ocean of compassion and while distributing His grace to all, also rescue me by stretching His Holy Lotus Feet upon me?'

Actually it is by the grace of the Supreme Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and His absolute counterpart, the all-merciful Gurudev, that the devotees are inspired to put forth questions, and to express their desire to engage me in singing the glories of the Supreme Lord and to recapitulate whatever I heard from Gurudev to purify my mind with the object to get enhancement in devotion.

**Ontological aspect of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu**

Ontologically, Who is Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, and what is His teaching? Appropriate knowledge of these two queries is absolutely necessary to realise the answer of the question. As time is limited, an elaborate discussion will not be possible. Consider the evidence from Sri Chaitanya Charitamṛta, Adi, 1.3:

*yad advaitam brahmopaniṣadi tad apy asya tanu-bhā*

*ya ātmāntar-yāmī puruṣa iti so 'syāṁśa-vibhavaḥ*

*ṣaḍ-aiśvaryaiḥ pūrṇo ya iha bhagavān sa svayam ayaṁ*

*na caitanyāt kṛṣṇāj jagati para-tattvaṁ param iha*

'Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is the self-evident, complete and original Supreme Lord, the Possessor of six-fold opulences. No other entity is superior to Him. What the Upanishads have referred to as advaita brahma is actually the effulgence of His transcendental form. Paramatma, Who is residing in the heart of every living being, is His partial manifestation.'

Consider the following evidence from Srimad Bhagavatam (11.5.32). Karbhajan Muni (sage) spoke to Nimi Maharaj about the Holy divine descent in this iron age (yugavatar in Kaliyuga)

*krishna-varnam tvisakrishnam sangopangastra-parsadam yajnaiḥ sankirtana-prayair yajanti hi su - medhasaḥ*

'He Who is always devoted to uttering the two syllables (in Sanskrit) 'kr' and 'sna' and by that is devotionally inclined to search for Krishna; Whose essential parts are Sri Nityananda Prabhu and Sri Advaita Acharya; Whose accessory limbs are His sheltered devotees— Srivas Pandit etc.; Whose weapon is Harinam — holy transcendental divine sound; Whose personal and most dear associates are Sri Gadadhar Pandit, Damodarswarup, Rai Ramananda, Sanatan, Rupa etc.; Whose charming color is akrishna (i.e. signifying the golden color of that very Gaurasundara—inside Krishna and outside Gaura (golden color), the effulgence of the combined manifestation of Radha Krishna; will be worshipped by highly talented persons in this Kali-yuga by means of sankirtan-yajna.'

## **Rare kaliyuga**

The original Supreme Lord and many avatars have descended in India. Therefore there are so many holy places of pilgrimage in India. Actually the holy name of India is ' Bharatvarsa'. The holy scriptures of Bharatvarsa are all written in Sanskrit. So it is difficult for persons outside India to understand the ontological significance of the Indian scriptural words. That is why we are repeatedly submitting our prayers to foreign devotees to adopt some words befitting Bharatvarsa, although it is true that many foreign devotees have now become accustomed to some Sanskrit words due to the wide- spread Harikatha of our revered Srimad Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj in English. For example, the meaning of 'Bhaga' means opulences and 'van' means one who possesses the totality of wealth, totality of power, totality of beauty, totality of knowledge and totality of renunciation.

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the most munificent form of Godhead, appeared in this Kaliyuga in the seventh Manvantar, to bestow the highest Krishna-prema, transcendental pure devotion to all, irrespective of caste, creed, religion or sect. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu appears only once in one day of Brahma. We are fortunate to be born in that day of Brahma. The span of life of fourteen Manvantars is equal to the span of life of one day of Brahma. We are now in the Kaliyuga of the 28th caturyuga (one cycle of the four ages: satya, treta, dvapara and kali), during the 7th Vaivasvata Manvantar. The span of life of one Manvantar is 71 caturyugas. It is because of the direction of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and His personal associates descending through the preceptorial channel that devotees are going outside India for propagation of suddha bhakti or pure devotion, only for the gratification of the Supreme Lord and His devotees. Preaching for preaching's sake is not good.

## **Very easy and extremely difficult**

In one sense suddha bhakti (pure devotion) is extremely difficult, but in another sense it is very easy. When fortunate votaries take absolute shelter of Sri

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and His personal associates, it will be very easy. But if the conditioned souls in the name of pure devotion endeavour for worldly interests with vanity and a challenging mood, they will be totally deprived of actual eternal benefit. Votaries must be simple hearted. There should not be any deceitfulness in their heart. We have heard one practical instance of this from our *guruvarṅga*. Emperor Khatvanga in India, was able to attain transcendental divine love in a moment when he sincerely took shelter of the Lotus Feet of the Supreme Lord. As long as there is misconception of self (any false ego in relation to the gross and subtle material bodies and also in relation to the non-eternal material world), the votary will be totally deprived of obtaining suddha bhakti. We should positively think we are not of this world. We are actually of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna and His transcendental realm. After that, whatever we do, will be bhakti. Pure devotion is the only way to get connection with the Supreme Lord, Who is all-bliss.

## **Sravanam and kirtanam**

To emphasise this, if we think we are of this unholy material world we shall become unholy, whereas if we think we are of the Supreme Lord we shall become holy, and after that we can serve the Supreme Lord with pure devotion. Our actual target of worship should be the gratification of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna not with any other purpose in mind. The end justifies the means. If the end is bad, the means will also be bad.

Example is better than precept. A pure devotee who engages himself for the service of Sri Krishna and His devotees will inspire others by his ideal life. This human birth is very rare and is only meant for worship of Sri Krishna. After creating the human species the Supreme Lord is satisfied. There is evidence from Srimad Bhagavatam (11.9.28). God is not satisfied by creating beasts, birds, trees, reptiles and ferocious animals, because they have got no power to discriminate between good and bad, eternal and non-eternal. They perform their actions out of instinct.

*śṛṇvataḥ śraddhayā nityam gṛṇataś ca sva-ceṣṭitam kālena nātidīrghena  
bhagavān viśate hṛdi*



(Srimad Bhagavatam 2.8.4)

'When a devotee hears with firm faith about the name, form, attributes, personal associates and pastimes of the Supreme Lord daily, and if after hearing he himself chants those glories, then Bhagavan Sri Krishna will appear in his heart very soon.'

The devotee who is hearing and chanting does not need to remember the pastimes artificially. Sri Visvanath Chakravarti has put the emphasis in his commentary to sravanam and kirtanam, and says that remembrance is subservient to sravanam and kirtanam.

*krte yad dhyayato visnurh tretayarth yajato makhaih dvapare paricaryayarth  
kalau tad*

(Srimad Bhagavatam 12.3.52)

'Whatever we get by meditation in Satya-yuga, by oblation in Treta-yuga and by worship of Deities in Dvapara-yuga, we can get that objective in Kali-yuga only by doing Krishna nam sankirtan.'

But, when chanting Krishna nam we should be very careful that it is done without the tenfold offences. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu says in His writing, first verse, 'ceto darpana marjanam...' by Sri Krishna we can get sevenfold attainments. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has given emphasis on uttering Harinama loudly, which contributes to the spiritual advancement of all living entities in general.

## **Do not sacrifice eternal benefit**

Prachar (preaching) is not for prachar's sake; it is not for mundane temporary benefits. Wherever we may go by the will of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna, Who is All-Good, we should perform bhajan (devotional practice); we should not forget the devotional purpose of our life. Everything will remain in this world; nothing from here will go with us; only devotion to Sri Krishna will go with us. So, it will be unwise to sacrifice eternal benefit for the sake of mundane

temporary benefits. The greatest hurdle of Krishna bhakti is committal of offence at the Lotus Feet of vaisnavas. We should always remember the teachings of Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

In my opinion it will not be beneficial for our devotional spiritual elevation if we do prachar for prachar's sake. All forms of bhajan including kirtan should be performed for the propitiation of Sri Krishna and His devotees.

Chanting of the Glories of Sri Krishna, His Name, Form, Attributes and Pastimes is the best form of bhakti. While performing bhakti (kirtan bhakti), prachar will be automatic. There is no need of making separate endeavour for this.

I returned to Calcutta with our party the day before yesterday after participating in the Sri Jhulan yatra festival of Vrindavana Math and doing some urgent work in New Delhi.

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**Question to Srila Gurudev** - *Recently I met my old friends. Many years ago, we used to drink beer and wine. By the grace of Lord Krishna I was able to stop it and start following the path of bhakti. My friends still continue to drink and eat meat. I want them to quit their bad habits. How can I help them?*

## **Help thyself and god will help thee**

I think it will be better to get a clear understanding for the solution of your problem, by going through the conversation of Kapil Bhagavan and Devahuti in the third canto, twenty-fifth chapter of Srimad Bhagavatam. Kapil Bhagavan has mentioned the qualities of a bona fide sadhu. First He has narrated the concomitant qualities and after that the original qualities of a sadhu. In mentioning the accompanying qualities, He has said that sadhus are

compassionate to the conditioned souls. try to remove the root cause of the miseries of conditioned souls, aversion to Sri Krishna, by persuading them to worship the Supreme Lord and practicing that in their lives. But in spite of this the conditioned souls, due to their bad impressions from previous lives imbibed by evil propensities, have the aptitude to commit sins. The aspirant, who desires to remove evil propensities, should try for himself to change his evil propensity. From outside, sympathetic persons may help him by spiritual instructions, but he has to try for this from his own initiative. 'God helps those who help themselves', 'Help thyself and God will help thee' (George Herbert). Sri Prahlad Maharaj tried his utmost to rectify his son Virochan by his own ideal life and teachings, but failed. However he did not become unbalanced, because he knew that in spite of his endeavour and teachings, his son may or may not accept his advice due to the influence of previous bad impressions. The Supreme Lord and His absolute counterpart *gurudev* do not interfere in the relative independence of the conditioned souls. The Supreme Lord is Omnipotent; He can do whatever He likes. But if He forcibly interferes, the person will be bereft of consciousness. If consciousness is destroyed, neither the person nor the Supreme Lord will be benefited. So the Supreme Lord by His personal appearance in the world and His personal associates, tries to persuade the aspirant to submit to and accept His teachings willingly.

Your effort to help your friends is laudable. You should not stop your endeavour and affection for your friends but you should not be disheartened if your friends are unable to accept your teachings.

I was glad to see your son in the last video conference. May All-Merciful Sri Sri Guru Gauranga Radha-Krishna bless you all. My love to you all.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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**Question to Srila Gurudev** - *It is not possible to register any kind of religious organisation in \_\_\_\_\_ as the law restricts any group other than Christianity,*

*Islam and Judaism. It is better to hold devotional activities in a devotee's house privately where devotees can get together. Regarding the \_\_\_\_\_ project, the devotee donor has requested the Math to be the Math of Pujoyapad Puri Goswami Maharaj. Hence I suggest that your donation be used in some other projects.*

## **Health and tour**

You are aware that I was awfully busy in the more than month-long Vrajamandal parikrama. It is my vow that I should participate in all sittings of Damodar vrata and also if possible not to miss participating in nagar sankirtan. I had to speak in 3 languages— Bengali, Hindi and English. There were so many devotees for initiation that I had to do this duty for 2 days. After Vrajamandal parikrama, I went to Chandigarh, Una (Himachal Pradesh), Rajpura (Punjab), and Bhatinda (Punjab). I participated in the Annual Functions in Una, Rajpura and Bhatinda Math, delivered speeches and also for some time, participated in nagar sankirtans.

Perhaps due to this heavy program, I felt some sort of heart trouble. Sri Swarup Damodar Das engaged one heart specialist doctor of New Delhi to examine me. In fact, I was admitted in the renowned Batra hospital and by angiography examination, it was found that out of 3 vessels, one vessel is completely blocked and other 2 vessels are blocked 70% and 50%. I have been advised to take complete rest. Dr. Kaul, heart specialist, has prescribed medicines to be taken daily. In spite of this heart trouble, I did not stop speaking in the evening meetings. I had to return to Calcutta from New Delhi to do some urgent works after taking permission from Dr. Kaul and also I participated in the 5-day spiritual sittings of the Calcutta Math Annual Function. I also participated in the nagar sankirtan for some time. High court Justices of Calcutta and many dignitaries came to Calcutta Math and requested me with folded hands to take complete rest and to speak as little as possible. Their idea is that I should not go for bypass surgery but taking rest and medicines regularly for several months and lifestyle regulations would be more advisable. Their advice is 'Prevention is better than cure'. At this age, bypass surgery will not help to increase the span of life. In spite of this difficulty, I had to come to Assam to attend the Annual Functions of 3 Maths at Tezpur, Goalpara and Guwahati. I also participated in

nagar sankirtans at Tezpur and Goalpara, which I should not have done. I felt some angina pain in Goalpara. I did not participate in the nagar sankirtan of Guwahati Math but regularly delivered speeches in the evening functions. I was engaged awfully at Tezpur, Goalpara and Guwahati with the duty of giving initiation to so many devotees. I have been receiving so many telephone calls to return to Calcutta immediately without participating in any other function, but as I have already announced about the Vyasa Puja ceremony at Puri Math on the occasion of the advent anniversary of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur in his advent place, it is impossible for me to cancel that program. Some foreign devotees already reached Puri and many others will go there to attend the function. I am leaving by flight with 5 others from Guwahati to Bhubaneswar on 18th February. Vyasa puja. will be celebrated on 21st February but meetings will be continued till 22nd February. We shall return to Calcutta on 24th February.

I have gone through the contents of your letter. It is my desire that there should be some permanent place for the devotees of Russia, Belarus and Minsk to meet, in whatever way possible in any convenient place. My humble donation can be used for the purpose wherever you want to spend that. \_\_\_\_\_ expressed his desire to spend some of my donation in the proposed place of Minsk. You can have a direct talk with him in regard to this. I was told by him that the proposed Math would be materialised within 2-3 months. I am anxious to know what progress has been done in regard to this.

## **Serve all by serving the Lord**

You are also aware that some women leaders of the 'women devotees association' of about 300 devotees, on being informed of our arrival at \_\_\_\_\_, came to participate in the function and I was intimated that 2 or 3 of them have taken initiation and later on by their inspiration, 50 other women devotees have taken

initiation at \_\_\_\_\_. They were very enthusiastic.

I received a letter from one woman devotee leader who has taken Harinam, explaining that something has happened by which they are disheartened. She has

written, “We want to learn all religions and all religious movements but not to belong to any of them and not to look for a guru from any part of the Mondial religion. This is a decision of all the learners. I am bound to obey. We want to communicate freely with representatives of different movements but not to be much linked to any religion in any way. This is our way and our free will.”

We belong to Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's school of thought, which practices and preaches pure devotion, one pointed devotion to the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna, by serving Whom we serve all. The main qualification of getting initiation in

our school of thought is that firm faith should be there, without any doubt in it. By serving Sri Krishna we serve all. If we pour water on the root of the tree, the whole tree will be nourished; if we give food to the stomach, all parts of the body will be nourished. Similarly, if we serve the Supreme Lord, Who is the All-unifying Spiritual Principle, we serve all. Without this qualification, nobody is entitled to take Harinam. To give Harinam to anybody without this belief is a kind of offence. We should be very careful in regard to this. Our school of thought is not an institution to increase disciples. My request to you is - you should try to meet the group of women or the woman devotee and personally talk to them or talk to her and discover the actual facts.

Our devotees should be taught about this. Giving initiation to a sincere soul is a kind of service to Supreme Lord. If there be any ulterior motive of increasing number, without seeing the qualification, our devotional spiritual life will be spoiled. To increase the number of disciples by any means is totally anti-devotional. We should not do this.

Hope this will find you all in good health and spirit.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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**Question to Srila Gurudev** - *Recently I started organising mass bhajans where devotees from different Gaudiya Maths including ISKCON could meet devotees and perform sankirtan in a vegetarian restaurant run by one of the disciples of Sriman BR Sridhara dev Goswami. By the grace of Sri Krishna, recently the President of the Lakshmi Narayan Temple has decided to offer this temple as the permanent venue for such sankirtans and prasad distribution every Sunday evenings. I seek and need your advice and blessing as to how I should continue to progress.*

## **Requirements of bhakti seed**

I am exceedingly delighted to get a letter from you after a long time.

I am glad to know that you have taken the initiative to restart the work of the registered society in Singapore. It is also encouraging to know that, in whose house I stayed once with my preaching party, is the President of the society and also our well-wisher friend \_\_\_\_\_, who helped me in preaching, has also taken interest in it.

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, through Srila Rupa Goswami, has taught us that hearing and speaking about the glories of Sri Krishna, sravan and kirtan are essential for getting enhancement in bhakti. Sravan-kirtan has been compared with water. As a living seed requires water for its growth, the potential real seed of bhakti, received from a bona fide guru, can have enhancement after practicing sravan-bhakti - hearing of the glories of Krishna from a bona fide bhakta, and kirtan-bhakti, reciting the same. I firmly believe that your sincere endeavour, by the Grace of Sri Guru- Vaishnav and the Supreme Lord Sri Gauranga and Sri Radha-Krishna, will be successful.

I think you remember, when we tried to have our preaching program at Singapore two years ago, we were not successful as we could not get a visa. Instead, we had our prachar program at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Devotees of Kuala Lumpur repeatedly requested us to go to a place near Kuala Lumpur for

preaching. Everything depends upon the will of the Supreme Lord. Without his desire, a leaf of a tree cannot move. We are to submit to the will of Sri Krishna, Who is All-Good.

May All-Merciful Sri Guru-Gaurariga bless you all.

My love to you all.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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**Question to Srila Gurudev** - *Please explain to us how GOKUL is functioning at present and how it should function in the future as per your vision and desire. Should we legally register our own group here in our country or should we join the existing global one (and how)? Our desire also is, if you could send some of your sannyasi, brahmachari or householder god-brothers or disciples to hold programs here if you personally cannot come because of your health difficulties, to give us the necessary inspiration and strength to go on with the service of Sri Guru-Vaishnav-Bhagavan. I have been invited by disciples of Srila Bhakti Vaibhav Puri Maharaj to speak on public vaisnava-program. As I feel myself incompetent for this task I am asking for your advice in this matter. I can speak nice flowery theoretical words to get mundane name and fame, but my realisation and actual service to Sri Krishna is very weak and I don't want to bring bad name on vaisnava religion.*

## **Sankirtan is highest Bhakti**

GOKUL is the abbreviation of 'Global Organisation of Krishna Chaitanya's Universal Love'. The word 'Universal' denotes that it is for all. But as per



worldly legal rules, it is better if you register it in. Members will be devotees of the Gaudiya school of thought.

When I consulted with the specialist doctor about my going outside India, he instructed me that the summer season would not be congenial to me in India, so I should go abroad with the condition that I should confine myself in one place and avoid undertaking tour-programs in different places. Devotees will come to me from different places. For the choice of the place, you are to consult with all devotees of Europe and England, especially, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_. For sending of preaching party, sannyasi, brahmachari or household devotees, I shall have to consult with devotees and sannyasis and can intimate you accordingly.

May All-Merciful Sri Guru-Gauranga Radha-Krishna bless you all and bestow you strength to serve them. My love to you all.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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## **Engage whole energy for service**

As an ascetic (brahmachari) you are free to move anywhere you like. You can contribute by using your skills for the broadcast of the message of Divine Love of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Those who live in household life are confined in the limited narrow sphere like a 'kupa manduka'— a frog in the well. This precious human birth is meant only for Krishna bh; not for eating, sleeping, defending and mating like beasts and birds. One who understands this engages his whole energy for the service of Sri Krishna. Any moment this body may perish and we will lose this chance. As you are sincere, I think you can contribute valuable service to the Institution.

May All-Merciful Sri Guru, Gauranga and Sri Radha-Krishna bless you. My love for you all.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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## Everything ever-linked with Lord

Praying blessings of Sri Guru, Sri Gauranga and Sri Radha-Krishna unto sincere souls desirous of serving Sri Krishna and His devotees without deceitfulness.

Received your letter dated \_\_\_\_\_. I remember having received another letter from you earlier.

The Supreme Lord Sri Krishna has said in the Gita (7.7) 'mattah parataram nanyat kincid asti dhananjaya mayi sarvam idam protam sutre mani-gana iva'. “There is nothing superior to Me. Everything is ever-linked with Me as pearls are connected by thread.” This realisation of connection with all living beings in relation to the Supreme Lord, will solve all problems caused by maladjustments. In this connection we should deeply think about what Prahlada Maharaj said to his father Hiranyakasipu —

*jahy āsuram bhāvam imam tvam ātmanah samam mano dhatsva na santi  
vidviṣaḥ rte 'jitād ātmana utpathe sthitāt tad dhi hy anantasya mahat  
samarhaṇam*

(Srimad-Bhagavatam 7.8.9)

Translation by Parampujyapad Srimad Swami Maharaj— 'Prahlada Maharaj continued: My dear father, please give up your demoniac mentality. Do not discriminate in your heart between enemies and friends; make your mind

equipoised toward everyone. Except for the uncontrolled and misguided mind, there is no enemy within this world. When one sees everyone on the platform of equality, one then comes to the position of worshiping the Lord perfectly.'

Your writing — 'Everything is engaged by the Will of Supreme Lord, and everything He arranges is for the good of all'— gives me solace. By the desire of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna, His Absolute Counterpart Most Revered Gurudev and Revered Jagamohan Brahmachari Prabhu, I came in contact with you and your husband at Calcutta Math and because of the repeated requests of \_\_\_\_\_ and approval of Pujoyapad Srlmad Jagamohan Brahmachari Prabhu, Godbrother of our Most Revered Gurudev and Math- in-charge of Calcutta Math, you received Harinam initiation. As previously mentioned, my coming in contact with you helped our preaching in different places of USA and England and is so sweet and encouraging, which can never be forgotten. I think your enthusiasm for the service of Sri Krishna and His devotees will be resumed again with double force.

Considering my deteriorated health condition, our friends advised me not to undertake journeys outside India this year. Even in the next year, if there be any program of my going on foreign tour, I may go to London and stay in one place. Devotees are to come to my place of stay to see me. It may not be possible for me to undertake hectic tour. For my program in London, you are to consult with \_\_\_\_\_ and other devotees and friends. Everything depends upon the will of the Supreme Lord Who is All-Good. We shall be happy if we submit to His Will.

My love to you all. May All-Merciful Sri Guru-Gauranga Radha-Krishna bless you.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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**Risk of undesirable elements**

If the organisations have got the same end -- unadulterated devotion to Sri Krishna, there is no apprehension of erosion in the mutual love relations. Due to aversion to serving Sri Krishna, living beings are enveloped by the illusory energy of the Supreme Lord and are hurled down into this world to pass through cycles of births and deaths and to suffer three-fold afflictions. The prison house of is filled with enslaved jivas. A few living beings, due to their previous eternal good deeds, have the aptitude to worship Sri Krishna. Worshippers of Sri Krishna are rarely to be found in this world. When we want quality, we cannot get quantity. If we want to increase quantity we shall have to sacrifice quality.

When preaching centres and Maths are established for cultivation of spiritual and devotional enhancement, there is fear of undesirable elements entering into the spiritual organisations. Such ill-motivated persons can create disturbance. There exist such problems in all societies, because there are differences in the entrants regarding their calibre, taste and behaviour, which cannot be rectified all of a sudden. No institution can run without sevakas, so for that they allow sevakas. Undesirable elements also enter into it. All institutions have got this practical difficulty. The ideal is high, no doubt, but persons acting on it are very few. So, Krishna bhakti cannot be spread over without the initiative of Sri Krishna. There is no other way than to make the best of a bad bargain.

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**Question to Srila Gurudev** - *According to Krishna's will and Your blessings I have started to organise programs for devotees once a week. However we are still not inviting new people. Please instruct if I should continue in this way or organise something else?*

**Congregational chanting**

One of the original qualities of a suddha bhakta (narrated in Canto 3 of Srimad Bhagavatam, Kapil-Devahuti topic) is fondness for hearing and speaking about the glories of Sri Krishna and His devotees. As a fish cannot survive without water, a devotee also cannot remain without hearing and speaking Hari-katha. For progressing in bhakti, this is essential. Another important point is this — in this Black age (Kaliyuga), a votary cannot get inspiration to perform devotional practices separately, alone, without the association of bona fide devotees. Sangha (congregational chanting) is beneficial for the votaries of Kaliyuga. Something is better than nothing. In this consideration you should start doing this at least once a week. Devotees should get together, whatever the number may be. I hope if you start this by praying for the grace of Guru, Vaishnavas and Bhagavan you will be successful. If there be any person interested in devotional practice, who may not be of our own group, they should be allowed to participate.

I pray to Sri Guru and Gauranga to bless you all. My love to you all.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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**Question to Srila Gurudev** - *One wealthy well-wisher, not a has volunteered to help us with a place and equipment for a publication center. They have also brought here a whole car of different foodstuffs to somewhat meet half-year requirements, and I do not know what to do! I cannot throw that away, at the same time "visayira anna khaile malina haya mana" always sound in memory.*

**Everything is good if the target is good**

With dandavat pranams to the Lotus Feet of Revered Vaisnavas.

Received your affectionate letter sent through e-mail.

I am exceedingly delighted to know that you observed the month-long Damodar vrata with other devotees. As you have knowledge of Bengali and also of Sanskrit, your explanation of Bengali and Sanskrit writings in the \_\_\_\_\_ language naturally becomes impressive to the listeners. I am also encouraged that the listeners continued to hear explanation of the commentary (Sanmodan-bhashya) of Bhaktivinode Thakur regarding Siksastaka. Bhaktivinode Thakur's writing is simple, lucid and can be easily understood. Sanmodan means pleasing to the sadhus (suddha bhaktas). It is very necessary for enhancement in devotion, for the aspirants who have taken Krishna mantra, to regularly hear and speak about the glories of the Name, Form, Attributes and Pastimes of Sri Radha-Krishna.

I read about the generous wealthy person who sponsored the festivals. He is blessed as he contributed to the service of Sri Krishna and His devotees. Now he has the aptitude to help you to get a place for a publication center. You have started the work at a rented private house. You have also purchased computer equipment to work with your Most Revered Gurudev's archives.

The ascetics do prachar (preaching) and serve the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna, and His devotees collect funds from generous persons. If the collected funds and commodities are for the service of Sri Krishna and His devotees it cannot be harmful to the ascetics. If the target is good, everything is good. I am thankful to the generous person who has volunteered to give you a car-load of different foodstuffs to meet the requirements for 6 months but the foodstuffs should be such which can be offered to Supreme Lord. You are a sincere soul; your purpose is good; so I think you shouldn't be too much worried for this. When you come to India, I shall hear about your future program of Vishnu-Vaisnava seva and I shall try to contribute to it to the extent of my ability.

More when we meet next. Hope this will find you all quite hale and hearty. Accept my dandavat pranam. I pray to Supreme Lord Sri Krishna to bless the generous minded donor for propagation of the teachings of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

Vaishnavdasanudas,

Bhakti BallabhTirtha

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**Question to Srila Gurudev** - *Is it advisable for a to take help from lady-devotees in setting up and running the Math. What are the rules for dealings with women by a sannyasi in his preaching activity?*

## **Unholy vision is condemnable**

We cannot avoid seeing women but we should be careful of our motive while dealing with them. Everything depends upon how we look at them. Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has said that—

*niṣkiñcanasya bhagavad-bhajanonmukhasya pāram param jigamiṣor bhava-sāgarasya sandarśanam viṣayiṇām atha yoṣitām ca hā hanta hanta viṣa-bhakṣaṇato 'py asādhū*

(Sri Caitanya-Candrodaya-Nataka 8.24)

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu expressed His extreme regret by saying, “A bona fide sannyasi, who has taken up the vow to cross over the ocean of birth and death and the miseries of this world by fully dedicating himself to the service of the Lord, should avoid the vision of a person with mundane interest and enjoying spirit attached to riches and women. This sort of unholy vision is more condemnable than directly consuming poison”.

The female devotees can come to the Math, participate in the devotional functions, and even help in running the Math. However, staying in the Math as a permanent resident, especially at night, should be avoided.

## **Kartik program**

By the grace of Sri Guru Gauranga Radha Madhav ji, the month-long Damodar celebration terminated at Chandigarh Math grandly and successfully. A large number of devotees from different parts of India as well as some devotees from foreign countries participated in this function. I had to speak in Hindi and English. I tried to observe Damodar vrata as minutely as possible. It is a kind of vow to me every year. Here also I was totally engaged in attending early morning, morning, forenoon, afternoon and night sessions from 4:30am to 11pm. In the observance of the vow, I am to think continuously of the teachings of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's Siksastaka as well as uninterruptedly to remember the transcendental pastimes of Sri Radha-Krishna during the eight periods. So I had less opportunity to devote myself to any other work during that time. The Holy Advent Anniversary of our Most Revered Gurudev was performed very grandly on 7th November in which countless numbers of devotees participated to offer pushpanjali. Many persons including foreigners have taken Harinam and Mantra diksa. One newly initiated foreign devotee of Africa is insisting for my going to Mauritius Island as well Johannesburg, another place in South Africa. The friend devotees are prohibiting me to undertake foreign tour now at the present state of my indisposed health.

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## **PART 8 Vaiṣṇava Vows and Observances**

It is only by serving the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna, His personal associates and devotees that you can pay off your debts to father or mother correctly. Service to devotees is actual service to God.

### **Ekādaśī vratā**

There are two distinct ways of observing Ekādaśī vratā - śuddha bhakti vichār and karmakāṇḍa (smārta) vichār. Śuddha bhaktas observe Ekādaśī vratā only for the satisfaction of Śrī Krishna and His devotees and not for any material purpose. Karmakāṇḍis observe Ekādaśī vratā and other vratas for the fulfilment of mundane material interests. Actually Ekādaśī vratā is one of the forms of pure devotional practice to attain Krishna prema. In karmakāṇḍa, temptation of material fruits has been given to persuade the encaged ignorant jīvas to observe Ekādaśī tithi. This is not applicable to śuddha bhaktas.

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### **Purushottam vratā**

We shall observe Śrī Purushottam vratā from 16th May to 13th June, 1999. We shall daily read the glories of Purushottam vratā, from the writing of Śrī Bhaktivinode Ṭhākura, in the morning; daily recite Śrī Jagannāthāṣṭakam

and Chaurāgraganya Purushāṣṭakam in the afternoon and perform japam instructed by Kauṇḍilya Muni:-

*goverdhana-dharam vande gopālam goparūpinam gokulotsavameeshānam  
govindam gopikāpriyam.*

In the evening perform deep-dān of pure ghee before Vishnu mandir. At night read Brahmastav from Bhāgavatam - daśam skanda (Canto 10).

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## **Chaturmāsya vratā**

Chaturmāsya vratā is observed by all— karmīs, jñānīs, yogīs and bhaktas— for the attainment of their respective ends. It is a kind of penance. But there is difference in the mode of sādhana, as the ends of karmīs, jñānīs, yogīs and bhaktas are different. The ultimate goal of bhaktas is to get love for Śrī Krishna (Krishna prema).

The Supreme Lord Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, our Most Revered Param Gurudev and our Most Revered Gurudev, observed Chaturmāsya vratā only to teach us that we should also observe this vratā. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu observed Chaturmāsya vratā at Purushottam dhām and at the house of Śrī Venkat Bhaṭṭ in Ranganath dhām by spending the whole time performing Krishna katha.

Listening to and chanting of the Holy Name, Form, Attributes and Pastimes of

Śrī Krishna should be mainly performed. Along with this we should also observe exoteric rules as enjoined in the scriptures as far as practicable.

Gourd (Louki), bean (kidney bean, a long-size bean), brinjal, patal (a kind of vegetable), kalmishāk and purnishāk -- two kinds of herbs (leaves of plants) are prohibited in the four months of Chaturmāsya. Kalmishak and purnishak are not available in your side, so you are not to bother about this. All leaves of plants are prohibited in the month of Śrāvan, curd is prohibited in the month of Bhādra and milk in the month of Ashwin and all kinds of tasteful food prohibited in the month of Kārtik. There are other rules also. You are to know these by personal contact.

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## **Navadvīpa dhām parikrama**

More than one thousand devotees participated in Śrī Navadvīpa dhām parikrama celebration, staying at our Maṭh as guests. It was a huge thing. So, naturally we were all awfully busy in looking into the arrangements of stay and prasād of guests as well as regarding parikrama. We performed parikrama daily on foot and with sankīrtan procession, walking daily four miles, ten miles and one day 17-18 miles. Millions of people came to visit the birthplace of Lord Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu and the places of holy pastimes of Lord Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu and His associates.

Circumambulation of the holy abode of the Supreme Lord Śrī Hari is one of the principal devotional practices of the 64 kinds of devotion as specified by Śrī Rūpa Goswāmī in his book 'Śrī Bhakti Rasāmrita Sindhu' which include circumambulation, recital of hymns, counting over the beads silently and chanting of the Holy Name. There is evidence from the Srīmad Bhāgavatam that

the renowned devotee, Śrī Ambarīsh Mahārāj, emperor of the world, employed his feet in performing circumambulation of Haridhām (abode of Śrī Hari).

Parikrama (circumambulation) for devotion is to be performed on bare foot. It will be service to the devotees if we can give them comfort in performing parikrama on bare foot. Service to devotees is actual service to God.

Śrī Māyāpura and Śrī Nabadwīp dhām are not parts of West Bengal or India or a land of matter. Nabadwīp dhām or Śrī Māyāpura dhām has descended. As Śrī Gaurahari is beyond our comprehension, His dhām is also beyond our comprehension. By the causeless mercy of Śrī Gaurahari and Śrī Gaura-dhām, we can have contact with it. Therefore, Bhaktivinode Ṭhākura says "Lord Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, out of compassion, appeared in this world with His entourage, transcendental realm, name, form etc., to bestow Krishna prema, but he taught us six-fold śaraṇāgati by which we can get His grace."

External development is also necessary for the service of devotees and attraction of conditioned souls. To give comforts to the willing participants on parikrama, roads can be made smooth; sides of the roads should be grassy; there should be arrangement of drinking water at intervals and resting places. Śrī Māyāpura area roads, this year, have become dangerous for moving vehicles. Roads became bad due to inundation. We should think about a permanent solution.

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## **Vaiṣṇava rituals**

It is good news that you have got a baby boy. Your parents will be happy to have a grandson. The first letter of the name should be 'a' or 'l' as per almanac. You can name the child Ananta Biswambher, Lalit Mādhav or any other name

suitable to you after consultation with your parents. A household devotee will do vaiṣṇava-seva, harināma and Bhāgavatam pāṭh in all holy deeds. To pray for the grace of Bhagavān Narasimha Deva is also good to remove obstacles. You can do vaiṣṇava-seva at Śrī Māyāpura during Nabadwīp -dhām parikrama. You already performed your eleventh day ritualistic performance but you should always remember - no ritualistic performance is equal to harināma. The success of all ritualistic performances depends on the satisfaction of the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna. The best way of propitiating Śrī Krishna is chanting of the Holy Name, which you can do in all holy performances.

Annaprāsan of a daughter should be celebrated either in the 5th month or 7th month. In that case, it should be celebrated in the month of Bhādra or Kārtik.

Muṇḍan saṁskāra (chūrākaraṇ saṁskāra) is done in the 1st year, 3rd year or 5th year of a child as per family custom. There are fixed dates for performing chūrākaraṇ saṁskāra of a child every year. As per the almanac, the fixed dates for performing chūrākaraṇ saṁskāra his year (Bengal Calendar year) were in the month of Vaisakh - 25th April and 7th May. But you want to perform muṇḍan saṁskāra towards the end of September or early October. You are to find out some dates auspicious for other rituals and perform the function then. Generally, we do this in case of urgency. You should avoid doing the rituals in the month of Bhādra. You are to positively perform nāma-saṅkīrtana (especially kīrtana of Śrī Narasingh Deva) during chūrākaraṇ saṁskāra.

You are going to start a new business. Success of any enterprise depends on the satisfaction of Śrī Krishna. The easiest way of propitiating Śrī Krishna is to serve the vaiṣṇavas. Harināma saṅkīrtan, with allegiance to vaiṣṇavas, will remove all obstacles. You should perform Śrī Narasingh-stava kīrtana. You are to take advice from Śrī \_\_\_\_\_ regarding formalities of the function, viz. —banana-trees, leaves of mango- tree, Maṅgal Ghaṭ (consecrated earthen pitcher), Swastika (holy sign of fylfot) on earthen pitcher with Sindūr (vermilion) and pure ghee. The pitcher should be filled with water, amra-pallav (mango twigs) with five or seven leaves on the pitcher. Over that, if possible, one coconut and over that one

new napkin, etc. Blowing of the conchshell is also sacred. There should be fruits and sweets for bhog and distribution as prasāda to all present.

Submission to the Will of the Lord is the only way to get peace. We should not have any separate desire. Mundane things are perishable. Attachment to non-eternal things will ultimately end in suffering. We should pray for unadulterated one- pointed devotion and nothing else. Our relation with Śrī Krishna is eternal. All other relations are apparent and non-real. Śrī Krishna is the object of all-love. You can love Him as a son.

My love to you all. May All-Merciful Śrī Guru and Śrī Gaurāṅga bless you.  
Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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## **Glories of Śrī Tulsi**

You have expressed the desire in your letter to know about the glory of Śrī Tulsi and the necessity and efficacy of Tulsi pūjā. There are enough scriptural evidences which have described elaborately about the glories of Tulsi which cannot be quoted here in a letter. The subject has been elaborately dealt with in some issues of Śrī Chaitanya- Vāṇī monthly magazine.

You will get enough evidences in Skanda Purāṇa, Padma Purāṇa, Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa and other Purāṇas regarding glories of Tulsi and advent of Śrī Vrinda Devi as Holy Tulsi Tree in this world to grace the jīvas of this world by bestowing on them service of Śrī Krishna and Śrī Nārāyaṇa.

Jīvas are deprived of the service of Śrī Krishna, when they unfortunately become averse to Him due to misuse of relative independence. It is narrated in the Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa that Vrinda Devi appeared in this world as Tulsi accepting King Dharamadhvaj and Madhavi Devi as her parents in Kārtika Purnīma tithi as per the desire of Śrī Krishna and Śrīmatī Rādhā Rāṇī. As there was none equal to her in beauty, she was named Tulsi. Tulsi performed a līlā (pastime) of severe penance to get Nārāyaṇa as her husband (pati) . She obtained this boon from Śrī Brahma. As per the desire of Śrīmatī Rādhā Rāṇī, Sudāma gopa appeared in this world as Sankhachur dānava, whom Tulsi married first. Sankhachur dānava seized Swarga (the abode of the demigods) by his tremendous power. The devatas (demigods) at first took shelter of Brahma, then Siva and ultimately Viṣṇu for their rescue from the oppression of Sankhachur dānava. Viṣṇu Bhagavān appeared, killed Sankhachur dānava and fulfilled the desire of Tulsi. Viṣṇu conferred a boon on Tulsi that her body would be Gaṇḍakī nadi (Gaṇḍakī River) and her hairs would be Tulsi. Viṣṇu Bhagavān appeared in this world as śālagrāma-śilā.

Whatever is done by the will of God is for the eternal benefit of all, as He is All-Good. E.g cow-dung (stool of cow) & conch-shell (bone of an animal) are considered sacred by the will of the Lord. So what difficulty is there in believing Tulsi as the holy tree appearing in this world by the will of Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna to bestow on us His service? There is nothing impossible for God, Who is Omnipotent. God can appear in this world in any form He likes, for the eternal good of the enslaved jīvas, over whom He has got affection. You should perform Tulsi pūjā daily.

The glory of Tulsi has been narrated immensely in all scriptures. It has been stated in the scriptures that only the most fortunate persons get the opportunity of being cremated by Tulsi tree after death. Even if a bough or branch or twig of Tulsi tree is offered on the dead body during cremation, the person will get emancipation from all sins. But Tulsi branch should be put on the upper portion of the dead body.

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## Serve the root

I was shocked to receive the news that your most revered father suddenly passed away. It will be difficult to fill the vacuum created by his passing. He was like a guardian of our Maṭh in Assam and it is very difficult to tolerate his separation from us. Naturally it will be more difficult for you, your brother, sisters and dear and near ones to tolerate this severe grief of separation. Your revered father, grandfather and grandmother, are all well known to me and they are a renowned family of Goalpara. Your father was a very religious person and your revered mother is also devotionally inclined like your father. Their affection for us and the encouragement they gave for the support of the institution is immense, at least to me. I have no suitable words to give consolation to your revered mother in her bereavement. My class-friend is residing near your house. It is my desire that you should approach him and request him to come to your house to console your mother and others. He is also a religious- minded, wise person.

Actually all relationships in this world are temporary. By the desire of the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna, jīvas take birth and after living here in this world for some time they leave this world. Being infatuated by the Lord's illusory energy of three primal qualities, Sattva, Rajaḥ and Tamaḥ, we wrongly think all these relations are ours. By thinking so, we become attached to them and mourn in separation from them. In the Gītā (2.27) it is said, “jātasya hi dhruvo mṛtyur dhruvaṁ janma mṛtasya ca tasmād aparihārye 'rthe na tvaṁ śocitum arhasi”— 'The person who is born will surely die, and after death will be born again to reap the fruits of his actions from previous births. The wise do not mourn for that which is inevitable.'



Now how can we serve your father and pay back our debts to him? In Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, the quintessence of all scriptures, Veda Vyās Muni has said (4.31.14), “yathā taror mūla-niṣecanena tṛpyanti tat-skandha-bhujopasākhāḥ prāṇopahārāc ca yathendriyāṇāṁ tathaiva sarvārhaṇam acyutejyā”— If we pour water at the root of the tree, the whole of the tree will be nourished; if we give food to the stomach, all the limbs of the body will be sustained and maintained; similarly, if we serve the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna, Who is 'achyuta', the all Unifying Spiritual Principle, and is the root of all, all will actually be served including your father.

You may engage brāhmins to perform śrāddha (obsequies) for your late father in whatever way you prefer according to social custom. But as your father was devotionally inclined, it is my desire that, in addition to your śrāddha-function, you should also hold discourses on Śrīmad Bhāgavatam with vaiṣṇavas and arrange for nāma sankīrtan at your house for the satisfaction of the departed soul. Also, it is my further desire that you should do something for the worship of Śrī Guru Gaurāṅga Rādhā-Krishna at Śrī Chaitanya Gauḍīya Maṭh, Paltan Bazar, Guwahati, on that auspicious day and make arrangement for distribution of prasād to devotees. For this you may approach Śrīmad Bhakti Ranjan Yācak Mahārāj, Maṭh-in-charge, and take his advice. I want to contribute to this holy function and shall speak on the phone to Śrīmad Yācak Mahārāj.

I also want to publish an article about your revered father in our monthly Bengali Journal with photograph. You are to send one good photo and all particulars of his holy life. You are to make your mother understand the purport of my writing.

May All-Merciful Śrī Guru Gaurāṅga Śrī Rādhā-Krishna bestow eternal peace to the departed soul of your revered father and also bless you all. My love to you all.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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## **Greatest grief**

We are all shocked to receive the sudden heartrending news of the demise of your revered father who had been inspiring us to engage ourselves in the service of Guru, Vaiṣṇava and Bhagavān. We received the news that he passed away in his own house in Bhatinda on 17th February, 2008, Sunday, mid-day.

*duḥkha-madhye kona duḥkha haya gurutara?*

*kṛṣṇa-bhakta-viraha vinā duḥkha nāhi dekhi para*

(Śrī Chaitanya Charitāmrita, Madhyalīla, 8.248)

'Amongst all kinds of sufferings which suffering is considered very serious? Other than separation from a devotee of the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna, no other grief is so painful.'

It is beyond my capacity to write suitable soothing words to give consolation to your mother and to you. It is only by serving the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna, His personal associates and devotees that you can pay off your debts to father or mother correctly.

I want to know something about the history of your father including his parents, other relations, his spiritual initiations etc. for our monthly magazine.

May our All-Merciful Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga Rādhā-Krishna bless you all and bestow you strength to tolerate the grief of separation. I am so so.

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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## Separation grief

We are all extremely dismayed to receive the heartrending news of our sudden separation from your revered father who had dedicated his life completely and sincerely to the service of the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna and was always giving impetus to all for making their valuable human births successful. We heard the news of his demise in his own house on 28th April, 2008, Monday at about 9 a.m.

*duḥkha-madhye kona duḥkha haya gurutara? kṛṣṇa-bhakta-viraha vinā duḥkha nāhi dekhi para*

(Śrī Chaitanya Charitāmrita, Madhyalīla, 8.247 )

'Amongst all kinds of sufferings which suffering is considered very serious? Other than separation from a devotee of the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna, no other grief is so painful.'

It is beyond my capacity to say some soothing words to console the hearts of you and your family members. I want to give reference to one important instruction of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, the quintessence of all scriptures (4.31.14), 'by pouring water on the root of a tree, the whole tree is nourished and by giving food to the stomach, all parts of the body are nourished. Similarly, by serving Achyuta-ŚrīKrishna, all will be properly served.' As your revered father served the Supreme Lord Śrī Krishna, his devotion has paid back his debts to all. So for the Supreme Lord's satisfaction we must make arrangements to serve Śrī Krishna and His devotees on the proper auspicious day which will be decided by the devotees. Śrīmad Bhakti Saurabh Āchārya Mahārāj or another sannyāsī will serve as priest and will do everything properly, including vaiṣṇava hom. Devotees are to be invited and served. There should also be harinām sankīrtan and reading of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam. There should also be viraha-utsav and viraha-sabha, where sādhus will speak about the glory of your revered father. I shall also do viraha-mahotsav as well as viraha-sabha here in Kolkata Maṭh.

May All-Merciful Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga and Śrī Krishna bless you and bestow you strength to tolerate your grief of separation.

Further I am inspired to repeat a divine message of a renowned saint of North-India in Hindi, which you must have heard:-

*kṛṣṇa-nām tū bhajale manavā, bhavasāgara tara jāyegā jo nā tūne bhajan kiyā  
to phira pāche pachatāyegā*

(O mind, just worship the divine Name of Krishna and you will cross the ocean of birth and death. If you don't worship now, then you will repent later.)

*kyā lekar tū āyā jagata meṇ, kyā lekar tū jāyegā muṭṭhi bāndhe āyā jagat meṇ,  
hath pasāre jāyegā*

(What have you brought here and what will you take with you? You came here with a closed hand, and you will go with an open palm. )

*dhan daulat aur māl khajānā, saṅg nahin kuch jānā hai is duniyā se ristā terā,  
ek din sab chuṭa jānā hai*

(Money, wealth or any treasure, nothing will go with you. All your relations in this world will be left behind one day. )

*do din yahān paḍā hai mūrakh, phir sāche ghar jāyegā jo nā tūne bhajan kiyā  
to, phir pāche pachatāyegā*

(O fool, you are here only for a day, or two, after which you have to go to the abode of the Lord of death. If you don't worship now, then you will repent later.)

*manuṣya colā pāyā hai to, harinām kā jap karo caraṇa-bhakti prabhu mujhko  
dekar, merā bhī uddhār karo*

(Since you have received this human birth, you should chant the Holy Name, praying thus: “O Lord, Please give me devotion at Your Lotus feet and rescue me thus.”)

*māyā moh ko choḍkar mūrakh, tu ūpar uṭh jāyegā kṛṣṇa-nam tū bhajale manavā,  
bhavasāgar tar jāyegā*

(O fool, leaving all your material entanglements, you should rise above. O mind, just take the divine Name of Krishna, and you will cross over the ocean of birth and death. )

Affectionately yours,

Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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### **Exclusive necessity of devotion**

I hope by the grace of Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga that you are all in good health and spirit.

You are aware that two persons have taken initiation at \_\_\_\_\_ by your recommendation. One of them is an aged woman devotee. You are well versed in the devotional conclusive thoughts of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu and you can make her understand correctly in your language. It is learnt from her letter that she came to our Maṭh at Vrindāvan and met me, but because of my heavy engagements, I cannot remember her meeting me. Another devotee from \_\_\_\_\_ took few books from me and after returning to \_\_\_\_\_, offered those books to her. She has expressed her desire to do something for propagating the teachings of śuddha bhakti if she gets some impetus and help for this. I think you have some of our printed books with you, which can be offered to her.

As per the injunction of the scriptures, no female devotee should be invested with sacred thread in which hom (offering ghee to fire) is performed. Only competent male members can get investment of sacred thread as per direction of guru, but that is not exclusively necessary for bhajan. Chanting of the Holy Name is the only way to get the highest objective -- Krishna prema in Kaliyuga, the black age. We can give the illustration of the holy biography and teachings of Namāchārya Haridas Ṭhākura. I have heard from our guruvarg that Vaishnavism has got some similarity with the teachings of Jesus Christ. It is important to practice pure devotion in the company of a pure devotee. 'Example is better than precept'.

Accept my daṇḍavat praṇāma.

Affectionately yours, Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

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